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**RHETORIC AND LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE EARLY
SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT**

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M.A., M. PHIL**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years the importance of the Scottish contribution to rhetoric and literary criticism has begun to be fully recognised by historians and literary critics. Men such as Hugh Blair, Adam Smith and George Campbell have now been afforded a just place in the canon of literary critics. However, the period before the 1760s which saw a great flourishing in Scottish intellectual activity has, by in large, remained untouched. The main purpose of this thesis is to rehabilitate those thinkers in Scotland who were active in the period before this, and who began to change the boundaries of rhetoric and literary criticism, which ultimately paved the way for their fellow countrymen to export their own systems to Europe and the wider Atlantic world.

In addition to this, the thesis addresses two other major concerns. Firstly, it will argue that Scotland in this period does not deserve to be viewed as merely a cultural province of England, reacting solely to its larger neighbour's cultural agenda. Instead, the Scots were engaged in a European-wide exchange of ideas which allowed them to develop a system of rhetoric and literary criticism which was richer than a brand that was developed only in response to English cultural pressure. Secondly, the thesis will demonstrate the importance of the classical influence on Scottish thinkers in their attempts to forge a new style of rhetoric for modern consumption.

The structure of the thesis has been set in such a way as to provide a balance between the development of rhetoric in regional enlightenment centres, in terms of both university and club activity, and its development and progression in the traditional institutions of Scotland: the parliament, the church and the law. The first three chapters focus on Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and chart the different influences that each city was subjected to, that in turn led to the construction of differing, yet still in many respects, complementary systems. Within the universities themselves, the figures of Thomas Blackwell of Aberdeen, Francis Hutcheson of Glasgow, and John Stevenson of Edinburgh, merit substantial analysis for their role in this process, not only for the influence which they exerted on future generations of literary critics in Scotland and abroad, but also for their own contributions to the discipline, which have been frequently overlooked. The focus on the regional varieties of Enlightenment also permits for a discussion of club activity in Scotland, which was an integral part of the Scottish Enlightenment. This will demonstrate that the growth of rhetoric and literary criticism in the country was not the sole preserve of the educated elites, but was something which could be accessed from all levels of society.

The second half of the thesis focuses on the institutions of Scotland. This section seeks to restore to parity, sources such as political pamphlets, sermons and style books which, under the rules of modern day criticism that concerns itself with only a narrow band of literature, have become overlooked as a foundation for rhetorical development. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to assess the contribution to the advance in critical theory of those individuals such as Lord Kames and Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh who did so away from the universities.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUL	Aberdeen University Library
BL	British Library
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
GUL	Glasgow University Library
ML	Mitchell Library (Glasgow)
MUL	Manchester University Library
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NLS Adv.	National Library of Scotland (Advocates Library)

INTRODUCTION

The Scottish Enlightenment, a phrase first coined by William Scott in 1900, has now come to be recognised as one of the key intellectual movements in western culture.¹ Although Scots reached across continental divides to engage in an exchange of ideas with their European counterparts, they also led the way in the creation and establishment of new disciplines and critical modes of thought. Enlightened Scots could make a legitimate claim to have initiated several fields of their own, including modern geology, thanks to the investigations of James Hutton; sociology, through the work of John Millar; and also political economy, as a result of the philosophy of Adam Smith (1723-1790), who along with David Hume, was one of the greatest thinkers that Scotland produced in this period.² As a consequence of this extensive engagement in a disparate array of subjects, the historians of the Scottish Enlightenment have often been at odds as to what factors constitute the core elements of the movement. It was Hugh Trevor-Roper who first linked the progress of the Scottish Enlightenment to the growth of the study of political economy in Scotland. John Robertson expanded upon this concept to include

¹ Although the Scottish Enlightenment has been established as a coherent and concrete movement, it was only recognized as such within the last fifty years. Even though Scott, a historian and biographer of Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith, was one of the first to refer to the 'Scottish Enlightenment' as a discernible term for the period in question, in the 1950s, John Clive and Bernard Bailyn argued that Scotland was no more than a cultural province of England. John Clive and Bernard Bailyn, 'England's Cultural Provinces: Scotland and America', *William and Mary Quarterly* 3 (1954), pp. 200-213. The debate on the validity of a Scottish Enlightenment was ignited by Hugh Trevor-Roper in his incendiary essay questioning the founding principles of a Scottish branch of Enlightenment. Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 58 (1967), pp. 1635-1658. In response to Trevor-Roper's arguments Duncan Forbes concentrated his investigations into the Scottish Enlightenment on the study of both Hume and Smith as the key figures in Scotland. Duncan Forbes, *Hume's Philosophical Politics* (Cambridge, 1975). More recently, David Allan has sought to demonstrate that the Scottish Enlightenment has roots which stretch further into the nation's history than for which Trevor-Roper afforded it. David Allan, *Virtue, Learning and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1993)

² For more on these individuals see: John Playfair, *Biographical Account of James Hutton* (Edinburgh, 1797); G. Y. Craig and J. H. Hull, eds., *James Hutton: Present and Future* (Bath, 1999); William C. Lehmann, *John Millar of Glasgow, 1735-1801: His life and thought and his contributions to sociological analysis* (Cambridge, 1960); Knud Haakonssen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith* (Cambridge, 2006);

historiography and moral philosophy as handmaidens to political economy.¹ However in contrast to the emphasis on political economy, historians such as Roger Emerson and Paul Wood have sought to promote the scientific contribution which Scots made to the enlightenment, most notably through Hutton, but amply aided by men such as Joseph Black and William Cullen.² As a result of this division over the key contributions to the Scottish Enlightenment the field of rhetoric and literary criticism has remained until recently on the periphery of this debate, because the development of literary theory does not fall neatly into either of the two categories. However, borrowing aspects from both positions, Alexander Broadie emphasises the central importance of philosophy in Scotland at this time, as it formed the solid foundations upon which reasoned investigation could be built upon, not just with regard to philosophy itself, but also in the sciences and in the arts.³ This broader cultural definition of the Scottish brand of Enlightenment has been developed more thoroughly by Richard B. Sher who seeks to reinstate disciplines such as science and medicine within the intellectual culture of the period. Sher insists that these are vital components of the Enlightenment, but should not be afforded precedence over other branches of thought.⁴ This method of approaching the Scottish Enlightenment offers a third way, and a method which allows for a more cogent study of the relationship between the Scots literati and the growth of literary criticism.

¹ John Robertson, 'The Scottish Enlightenment at the limits of the civic tradition', in, Istvan Hont & Michael Ignatieff eds., *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 137-178; John Robertson, 'The Scottish Contribution to the Enlightenment', in, Paul Wood ed., *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, 2000), pp. 37-62

² See: Charles W. J. Withers and Paul Wood eds., *Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment* (East Linton, 2002); Paul Wood, 'Science in the Scottish Enlightenment', in, Alexander Broadie ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 2003), pp. 94-116

³ Alexander Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 2001); Alexander Broadie, 'Introduction', in, Alexander Broadie, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 1-7

⁴ Richard B. Sher, 'Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Lessons of Book History', in, Paul Wood ed., *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, 2000), pp. 99-156

This is because the men who made such great strides in this field were not solely literary critics, they were moral philosophers, clergymen, lawyers and university lecturers who frequently traversed genres and disciplines in their intellectual investigations, and as a result defy the compartmentalising process which seeks to place such thinkers in neat boxes for categorisation.

Although they were instrumental in its modern development, the Scots were not the first to provide systems for the development of rhetoric and literary criticism, as there was already a rich classical and European tradition which accounted for rhetorical practices. Nevertheless they proved themselves to be among most adept at advancing the study of rhetoric, and adapting it to suit modern requirements. Smith was one of the most innovative figures in this sphere, but he was amply complemented by Hugh Blair (1718-1800), a moderate clergyman, and the writer of one of the most widely read collection of sermons in Britain in the eighteenth century.¹ Smith and Blair were writing at a time when rhetoric was going through a process of profound change; a change which would ultimately lead it down paths that would facilitate its reconstruction as a branch of literary criticism. No longer bound by its primary designation to persuade an audience through oral transmission, the discipline of rhetoric ultimately became decoupled from its moorings and instead moved to encompass literary genres accounting for the fine arts and the written word.² It was in this enlightenment milieu that the Scottish moral philosophers began to re-forge that rhetoric into a system which established itself at the root of the

¹ Hugh Blair, *Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1777-1801)

² Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., London, 1961); Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom from Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton, 1968); Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976); George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (London, 1980); Brian Vickers, *In Defence of Rhetoric* (Oxford, 1988); Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (London, 1995)

study of English Literature at University level education.¹ Recent work by Robert Crawford in *Devolving English Literature* (1992 reprinted 2000), and his edited collection of essays in *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (1998) have reinforced the impact that the Scottish literati had on the emerging discipline of literary criticism.² This has been augmented by works on the dissemination of Scottish rhetoric abroad, *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (1998), as well as works on the Scottish impact in Europe and America, most notably Thomas P. Miller's *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces* (1997) and Franklin E. Court's *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study 1750-1900* (1992)³.

At the apex of this literary critical canon stands the enlightenment giant Smith, and his fellow professor Blair, who was given the Regius Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh in 1762 and taught his influential course for twenty years before retiring, after which he published the notes from his programme under the title, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783). This work became the standard textbook on taste and composition in the Atlantic world in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and also formed a part of the University curricula in France and America during the early stages of the nineteenth century. Both of these men altered the way that rhetoric was to be

¹ William Riley Parker, 'Where do English Departments Come From?', *College English* 28 (1967), pp. 339-351; Thomas P. Miller, 'Where did College English Studies Come From?', *Rhetoric Review* 9 (1990), pp. 50-69; Richard Terry, 'The Eighteenth-Century Invention of English Literature: A Truism Revisited', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19 (1996), pp. 47-62

² Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Edinburgh, 2000); *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*, ed., Robert Crawford (Cambridge, 1998)

³ *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences*, ed., Lynne Lewis Gaillet (New Jersey, 1998); Thomas P. Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces*, (Pittsburgh, 1997); Franklin E. Court *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Culture and Politics of Literary Study 1750-1900* (Stanford, 1992). See also: Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York, 1971); Thomas P. Miller, 'The Rhetoric of Belles Lettres: The Political Context of the Eighteenth-Century Transition from Classical to Modern Cultural Studies', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 23 (1993), pp. 1-19

deployed, moving it away from the civic and classical ground which it had previously occupied, and relocating it within the bounds of civil society and the modern world.

Underneath these two men are a host of Scottish rhetoricians who made significant contributions to its development, and who flourished from the 1760s onwards. From this second tier of literary critics the names of Henry Home (Lord Kames), who wrote *Elements of Criticism* (1762), George Campbell, who composed *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), and John Witherspoon are important, not only for their impact upon the Scottish understanding of rhetoric, but for its comprehension in Europe and America.¹

Along with Blair, the works of these men also took their place on the university curricula of the English speaking world. Although they were recasting the bounds of rhetoric in this period, all of these writers displayed a thorough appreciation for the classical authors. The works of Quintilian, for example, composed a solid base for Blair's rhetorical system, which he then built upon to construct a system fit for the modern age. Although both Smith and Blair were steeped in the classics and frequently allowed them to inform their work, they were not slavish imitators of them. Indeed in his series of lectures at Glasgow University on rhetoric and belles-lettres Adam Smith remarked of the ancient texts on rhetoric: 'They are generally a very silly set of books and not at all instructive'.² His real contribution to literature was the establishment of what has been designated

¹ (Henry Home) Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (3 vols., London, 1762); George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (2 vols., London, 1776); John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (9 vols., Edinburgh, 1804-5) There were of course more Scottish writers who produced works on rhetoric and belles-lettres. For examples see: James Beattie, 'Of Sympathy', in, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh, 1778); William Barron, *Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic* (2vols., Edinburgh, 1806); Alexander Gerard, *An Essay on Taste* (Edinburgh, 1759). Robert Watson of St Andrews University who followed Adam Smith in providing lectures in rhetoric and belles-lettres to the young gentlemen of Edinburgh also gave a lecture course in this field. William Greenfield followed Hugh Blair as the Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in Edinburgh. Even David Hume produced works on Eloquence and Taste in the period. David Hume, *Four Dissertations* (London, 1757)

² Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed., J. C. Bryce (Oxford, 1983), p. 27

belletristic rhetoric, which covered some common ground shared with classical rhetoric and the modern style of belles-lettres which had its origins in France. Smith envisaged a system which incorporated taste, style, criticism and other forms of discourse which were studied through literature, such as drama, poetry, prose and history.¹ Smith and Blair were also avid appreciators of the *Spectator* of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, and many of the lectures which they gave at Glasgow and Edinburgh contained critical allusions to the style and method of that periodical's essays. The *Spectator* was subsequently imitated by likeminded belletristic publications from the *Northern Tatler* (1710) to the *Female Spectator* (1744-1746).² The influence which this periodical had over the Scottish belletrists is indicative of wider British Enlightenment impulses powering an exchange of ideas which took place not only between the dissenting academies in England, but also in the periodical press. This exchange does not reinforce the British brand of Enlightenment propounded by Roy Porter and Gerturde Himmelfarb however; for their objectives are to eradicate the Scottish Enlightenment in order to replace it with a British creation.³ It would of course be folly to suggest that the Scottish Enlightenment existed as a separate entity, almost as a satellite of the European Enlightenment which bypassed England in the exchange of ideas.⁴ And to some extent, in aggressively asserting the uniqueness of the Scottish Enlightenment, the inevitable

¹ James L. Golden & Edward P. J. Corbett, *The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately* (New York, 1968), pp. 8-9

² *The Spectator*, ed., Donald F. Bond (5 vols., Oxford, 1965); James Hodges, 'The *Female Spectator*, a Courtesy Periodical', in, Richmond P. Bond, ed., *Studies in the Early English Periodical* (Chapel Hill, 1957), pp. 151-182

³ Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, 2000); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* (New York, 2004)

⁴ J. G. A. Pocock has argued that one cannot really talk of *The Enlightenment* owing to the fact that it 'occurred in too many forms to be comprised within a single definition and history'. J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1999-2003), I, p. 7.

consequence is to remove it so far from other forms of Enlightenment that it ceases to be viewed as part of a coherent whole. One of the main objectives of this thesis is to reattach those bonds to the ongoing process of the European Enlightenment in order to demonstrate that Scotland was capable of constructing a distinct rhetorical system founded on the basis of a European exchange of ideas. Nevertheless, the Scottish Enlightenment does have unique markers of its identity, and the growth and expansion of literary criticism is one of those areas. Adam Smith's role in the general Enlightenment and his contribution to rhetoric are prime examples of this. The importance of Smith's invention has been articulated by W. S. Howell who states: 'He made rhetoric the general theory of all branches of literature – the historical, the poetical, the didactic or scientific and the oratorical. And secondly, he constructed that general theory, not by adopting in a reverential spirit the entire rhetorical doctrine of Aristotle, or Quintilian, or Ramus, but by selecting from the previous rhetorics what he considered valid for his own generation, and by adding fresh insights of his own whenever he saw the need to do so. As a result of these two innovations, his system of rhetoric is on the one hand more comprehensive, and on the other hand more independent than are those of his French predecessors'.¹ The French connection with rhetoric and belles-lettres is not to be lightly dismissed however. Barbara Warnick in her work, *The Sixth Canon: Belletristic Rhetorical Theory and its French Antecedents* (1993) was one of the first to demonstrate the debt which Scottish rhetoricians owed to their French counterparts. It was in France where the rhetoric began to change into a more literary based system, which the Scots would exploit more fully in

¹ W. S. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Jersey, 1971), p. 547

the eighteenth century.¹ The first significant attempt to reshape the classical ideal of rhetoric as the art of persuasion, into a more serviceable modern concept was Pierre de la Ramée (1515-1572), or Petrus Ramus to give him his Latinised name. In 1555 he wrote the *Dialectique* where he was concerned with what rhetoric was supposed to cover in its contribution to the Renaissance ideals of eloquence inherited from Cicero and Quintilian. The ancients held five tenets for the art of rhetoric which were: *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (disposition), *elocutio* (style or expression), *pronuntio* (delivery), and *memoria* (memory). Ramus removed *inventio* and *dispositio* and assigned them to dialectic. *Memoria* was removed altogether, as the printed word had, in his eyes, made remembering large amounts of information redundant. Only *elocutio* and *pronuntio* were left to support the base of rhetoric, although afterwards the development of *elocutio* brought a beneficial influence in applying rhetoric to literature. In turn the progression from rhetoric to criticism had been set in motion. The midpoint between these two is where belles-lettres is located, a term which was invented by a Jesuit author called René Rapin. Although it was Rapin who identified the term, it was another Frenchman, Bernard Lamy who captured its essence in 1675 when he wrote in his work, *La Rhétorique, ou L'Art de Parler*,

The art of speaking is very useful and has a very extensive application. It comprises everything that in French is called Belles Lettres; in Latin and Greek Philology, the Greek word

¹ See Bernard Lamy, *La Rhétorique, ou l'art de Parler*, (Paris, 1675). It was translated into English in 1708: *The Art of Speaking: Written in French by Messieurs Du Port Royal* (London, 1708). Charles Rollin, *De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres* (Paris, 1726-1728). It was translated into English in 1734: *Method of teaching and studying the belles letters... With reflections on taste; and instructions with regard to the eloquence of the pulpit, the bar and the stage.* (4 Vols., London, 1734). René Rapin, *Observations sur les poèmes d'Horace et de Virgile* (Paris, 1669); *Réflexions sur l'usage de l'éloquence de ce temps* (Paris, 1672); *Réflexions sur la poétique d'Aristotle et sure les ouvrages des poètes anciens et modernes* (Paris, 1676). A Translation of his critical works was made in 1731: *The Whole Critical Works of Monsieur Rapin* (2 vols., London, 1731). Petrus Ramus, *Dialectique* (Paris, 1555).

means love of words. To know Belles Lettres is to know how to speak, to write, or to judge those who write.¹

Although Lamy was responsible for defining the new concept of rhetoric it was Charles Rollin (1661-1741) who started to appraise literature in a critical fashion which was representative of the rhetorical system that existed in Scotland. Rollin was the Professor of Eloquence and Belles Lettres in the *Collège de France* in Paris. It was his work, *De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres* (1726-1728) which was translated into English in 1734 that provided literary criticism in a guise more familiar to a modern audience, and which championed the comparison of literary forms in order to construct a just opinion of taste. Rollin stated:

Tis justly observed, that nothing is more apt to inspire sentiments of virtue, and to divert from vice, than the conversation of men of worth, as it makes an impression by degrees, and sinks deep into the heart. The seeing and hearing them often will serve instead of precepts, and their very presence, tho' they say nothing, speaks and instructs. And this advantage is chiefly to be drawn from the reading of authors.²

Rollin's method of teaching belles-lettres was used by both the Aberdeen professors at Marischal College, and John Stevenson, the professor of Logic at Edinburgh. Indeed Stevenson's copy of the 1734 translation can still be found in the Special Collections department at Edinburgh University. It was not just a textbook for university study however, as it ultimately proved to be a popular work in Britain as a whole, for a second edition appeared in 1737.

¹ Bernard Lamy, trans. Neil Rhodes, 'From Rhetoric to Criticism', in, Robert Crawford ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 27

² Charles Rollin, *The Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres* (4 vols., London, 1734), I, p. 24. Rollin went on to expand on how this would augment taste: 'Taste as it now falls under our consideration, that is, with reference to the reading of authors and composition, is a clear, lively, and distinct discerning of all the beauty, truth, and justness of the thoughts and expressions, which compose a discourse'. *Ibid.*, p. 48

Although Crawford, Court, and Miller have performed a vital service in evaluating the importance of Scottish rhetoricians from the 1760s onwards, they have been less forthcoming about the period before Hugh Blair became a professor in 1762. Although attention is given to Adam Smith, and his lecture course in Edinburgh from 1748-1751, the men who formed the previous generation of Scottish Enlightenment thinkers have been, to a fair degree, excluded from the discussion. This creates a gap between the European influences on Scottish letters in the period before 1750, and the rhetorical system which the literati developed and then exported. Just as the Scottish Enlightenment did not spring like a Minerva from the head of Francis Hutcheson, neither did literary criticism come forth in a similar manner from the mind of Hugh Blair.

Because the rhetorical systems developed by Blair in Edinburgh, Smith in Glasgow, and Campbell in Aberdeen all contain subtle shades of difference, both in terms of their classical influences, but also because of the influence of their own professors, it is necessary to look at these different enlightenment centres in more detail. Therefore the first half of this thesis will concern itself with the development of rhetoric and literary criticism in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Glasgow in the period between 1688 and the late 1750s.¹ Although this will focus attention on the different variations of enlightenment as it filtered through these regions, it also permits for comparisons and parallels to be drawn between them. As one of the main engines powering the enlightenment, a large proportion of these chapters will necessarily focus on the universities in these cities and

¹ For more on the regional variations of the Enlightenment as it was experienced in Scotland see: Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock eds., *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987); Wood, Paul, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1993); Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher eds., *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (East Linton, 1997); James Buchan, *Crowded with Genius: The Scottish Enlightenment: Edinburgh's Moment of the Mind* (New York, 2003). For a more political take on these differences see: Roger L. Emerson, *Academic Patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment: Glasgow, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities* (Edinburgh, 2007); Roger L. Emerson, *Professors, Patronage and Politics: The Aberdeen Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen, 1992)

the professoriates that were associated with them.¹ However, a vital cog in that machine was the role which clubs had to play in the dissemination of ideas. The clubs were not only forums for the professors to provide papers on their latest discoveries, be they literary or scientific, they also extended links to the local communities and created unique regional identities. For example in Glasgow, the influence of the merchant class helped to create an environment where Adam Smith could test his theories on the *Wealth of Nations* (1776) and receive both theoretical and practical advice from those who were living in the worlds he was describing.² In a similar fashion George Campbell could read portions of his work *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) to members of the Aberdeen Philosophical Society, or Wise Club, and in turn receive friendly criticism from his peers. The club environment could also have a political agenda, which was evident in the Easy Club, a club that counted the poet Allan Ramsay among its members. Although this club was an open admirer of the ethos of the *Spectator* they were also keen to forge for themselves a unique Scottish identity and create an environment where they could produce their own literary endeavours. The club atmosphere of the eighteenth-century also accounted for members' classical and modern sensibilities, such as Thomas Ruddiman's club, whose manifesto was to preserve the classical tradition in Scotland; or the Edinburgh Belles-Lettres society, an organisation which had been started by students but ultimately grew to include prominent members of the literati. This club, as its very

¹ For the influence of the universities in shaping the enlightenment see: R. G. Cant, 'Origins of the Enlightenment in Scotland: The universities', in, R. H. Campbell & A. S. Skinner, eds., *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 42-64; Peter Jones, 'The Scottish Professoriate and Polite Academy, 1720-1746', in, Istvan Hont & Michael Ignatieff, eds., *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of the Political Economy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 89-117

² Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London, 1776)

name implied was dedicated to the appreciation of polite literary standards, and had a far more modern feel to it than the rigid classicism of Ruddiman's circle.

Within the universities themselves, there are several key figures who merit a more detailed analysis for their contribution to the development of rhetoric and literary criticism. In Aberdeen, Thomas Blackwell (1701-1757) was one of the premier figures of the early Scottish Enlightenment and indeed, one of the first to become commercially successful as well as intellectually influential, when he published his groundbreaking history of Homer, *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735). However, this work was more than simply a history, for it bound together many disparate threads and intertwined them into a complete system that in turn could be used as model for criticising literature, just as much as it could be used to aid historical enquiry. This Rational and Analytic method which he created not only gave Blackwell a British reputation, but also made a name for him in Europe, where many of the scholars working on Homer were aware of his writings.¹ Blackwell's system owed much to the scientific impulses which he was exposed to while a student in Marischal College. These impulses also influenced the works of David Fordyce (1711-1751) and George Turnbull (1698-1748), two members of Marischal College who taught before the 1750s, but whose influence was both lasting and widespread. Both of these men proposed educational reforms in their writings; Fordyce with *Dialogues Concerning Education* (1745) and Turnbull with *Observations on a Liberal Education* (1742). Both of these works

¹ In Britain Robert Wood knew of Blackwell's writings when he came to write his own work on Homer. Robert Wood, *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (London, 1769). Further afield, in Germany Herder knew *The Enquiry* as did Friedrich August Wolf, the man who advocated that Homer was not a man but the personification of a poetic tradition, which he wrote about in his work *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795). For more on the role of Mythology in the eighteenth-century and the European's relationship to it see: Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959); 'Thomas Blackwell', in, Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860* (London, 1972), pp. 99-102

contained observations on how rhetoric ought to be taught at University level, and furthermore they demonstrated an appreciation for literary critical practices which blended the best elements of classical and modern learning. These were not simply academic effusions which had no practical application however. For with Blackwell as Principal, Marischal college embarked on a new system of education in the 1750s, and the works of Fordyce and Turnbull were influential in providing blueprints for this new style of education.

This process which saw the alteration of the Aberdonian educational system had likewise occurred in Glasgow during this period. The premier figure in the University at this stage was undoubtedly Francis Hutcheson, a man labelled ‘The Father of the Scottish Enlightenment’, and a figure who would go on to influence not only Smith, but also Hume, and Immanuel Kant. Out of all of the figures in the early Enlightenment in Scotland, it is Hutcheson that has received the most critical attention. However, this attention is focussed almost entirely on his substantial contribution to moral philosophy. While this situation is understandable as this was the chair he held in the University, it has obscured most of the other contributions that he made to enlightenment culture. One particular area of neglect is Hutcheson’s literary critical appreciation which is most pronounced in his writings on aesthetics, most notably in *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725). Like Blackwell, Hutcheson’s first significant publication secured his reputation, and helped him to become the professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow. Although the aesthetics in Hutcheson’s works have been analysed extensively for their relationship to the moral sense, little has been written about their impact on literary criticism, other than to acknowledge that his teachings helped to

instil in Adam Smith an aesthetical appreciation which he exploited more fully in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) as well as his lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres. Therefore an analysis of Hutcheson's aesthetical system with regard to its literary considerations is both warranted and overdue. Hutcheson though was not the only figure at Glasgow who made contributions to the literary world; his fellow professor William Leechman, who held the Chair of Divinity, and who later became Principal of the University, taught an enlightened brand of theology on his course. This was important not only because this more moderate form of teaching instilled enlightenment values into an area of Scotland which traditionally had strong ties to the covenanting west, but also because Leechman provided clear instruction to his charges on the rhetorical style requisite for a preacher in the modern world. Although Leechman did not publish his works on rhetoric, they formed a core part of his theology course, and in certain respects anticipated some of Hugh Blair's ideas on rhetoric fit for the pulpit.¹ They also offer a fascinating contrast with Fordyce's *Theodorus: A Dialogue Concerning the Art of Preaching* (1752). The reason for this is that while Leechman followed the moral sense perception of Hutcheson which allowed for an intuitive deployment of rhetoric, Fordyce relied more upon empirical methods for testing and gauging audience response in order to locate the formula for perfect preaching.

The University of Edinburgh was far from idle during the period when Glasgow and Aberdeen moved rhetoric and aesthetics into new realms; and in this respect John Stevenson (1695-1775) was a pivotal figure. Stevenson had a hand in educating most of

¹ William Leechman, 'Manuscript of the 'Treatise of Rhetoric', 16th May 1763, GUL MS Gen.51; William Leechman, 'Lectures on Composition by the Reverend Mr. Leechman Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow', (1770), EUL MS D.C. 7.86

the men who would go on to make Scottish rhetoric and literary criticism into a discipline that was fit for export to both Europe and the Americas. Among his students were Hugh Blair, John Witherspoon, Francis Alison, Alexander Carlyle and Thomas Somerville. Men of letters such as William Robertson, Gilbert Elliot, William Wilkie and John Home were also students in his class. It was Stevenson who effectively held the first lectures on belles-lettres, which he ran as an optional class in his position as professor of Logic and Metaphysics. Stevenson is a hard figure to account for owing to his lack of published material, however, one can build a profile of him through the sources that have been left available to us. In this respect, a number of essays written by his students still exist, and although one must be extremely careful about using the essays of students to glean information on a professor, if used cautiously they are ample aids in reconstructing parts of Stevenson's critical thought.¹ Stevenson's fellow professor Charles Mackie, is also worthy of investigation for although he held the Chair of Universal History at Edinburgh, he was referred to by his own students as professor of Belles-Lettres. This title was not undeserved, for many of his history lectures were augmented by a study of literature and the benefits which quality productions could bring to historical appreciation. Like Stevenson, Mackie published little, if any, of his material, but unlike his colleague he did leave behind a substantial number of lecture notes, written in both Latin and English.² Both of these men demonstrated a strong appreciation of the classics, but at the same time they also instilled modern learning into their courses, for they were not slavish adherents

¹ 'A Collection of Essays by the students of John Stevenson', EUL MSS DC.4 54; John Stevenson, 'Memorabilia apud Johanem Stevenson Logicae Professore', GUL MS 310; John Campbell, 'Notes from Lectures on Logic, given by Mr. John Stevenson Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh', in, 'Observations on Logic by Several Professors', EUL MS. DK. 3. 2.

² Charles Mackie, 'Notes and Lectures', EUL MSS Laing Collection, La. II 37

to the classical system. The same could not be said of Thomas Ruddiman who remained a strict grammarian even when belletrism began to eclipse it as a critical method.

Ruddiman also became embroiled in a critical battle with the English belletristic critic William Benson, which offers a fascinating comparison between the two styles. This battle was located firmly in the classical tradition as both men sought to promote the literary values of their respective heroes, George Buchanan, in the case of Ruddiman, and Arthur Johnston in the case of Benson. This investigation will also reveal that although Ruddiman was a staunch classicist, there was enough in his work to suggest that he was aware of belletristic criticism as well as aesthetical considerations in the works of others, and he also had an admiration for some modern compositions, such as the works of Milton.

As a result of the interaction of texts in this thesis, regarding the influence and transmission of ideas, the deployment of student and professorial borrowing records from the period has been omitted. Robert Crawford has demonstrated that such information can be both intriguing and revealing, particularly with regard to the borrowing record of Robert Watson at St Andrews.¹ However, while such records can provide insightful glimpses into the reading habits of the borrowers themselves, they do not provide concrete proof that individuals who took out certain books actually read them. Therefore, in order to avoid the potential pitfall of erroneously attributing influences and ideas to eighteenth century students and scholars, I have only used sources that can be directly traced through a teacher-student relationship in the form of lecture notes, direct references to previously printed works in the productions of later enlightenment figures, and manuscript evidence in the form of letters alluding to reading habits. For example,

¹ Crawford, 'Introduction', p. 10

we know that Blair read most of Blackwell's works because he directly referenced them in his own lectures, while the letters of James Fordyce allude to his reading of Blackwell's productions. Equally, the influence exerted by Mackie, Stevenson, Leechman and Fordyce on their students can be detected in their lecture notes and student essays.

While this thesis is mostly concerned with Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, the University of St Andrews also played its part in the development of rhetoric and literary criticism in this period. Robert Watson (1730?-1781), who took over from Adam Smith in delivering lectures on rhetoric in Edinburgh, subsequently became Professor of Logic, Rhetoric and Metaphysics at St Andrews in 1756. Watson's course was designed to instruct his students on a variety of literary forms, including the rules of history and poetry, and he was particularly concerned that the acquaintance of these rules should lead to an improvement in taste. For the purposes of this thesis, I will not focus on rhetorical and literary developments at St. Andrews. Were this a study solely concerned with university rhetoric and criticism, it would be necessary and proper to include this institution. However, owing to the fact that St Andrews was not an urban centre, it lacked the significant club culture that existed in the three major cities in Scotland, and which forms a core part of the thesis. Furthermore, although Robert Watson was an important figure in the early development of Scottish rhetoric, he did not have an enormous inheritor of his craft in the same way that Blackwell, Stevenson and Hutcheson influenced Campbell, Blair and Smith: men who were able to take the new form of rhetoric and give it an international platform. As a consequence of these factors, in

addition to the space constraints of a PhD study, the University of St Andrews will only be referred to in passing during the course of this thesis.

The second part of this work moves away from the convivial atmosphere of the clubs and the ivory towers of Scotland's cities, and enters into the world of Scotland's institutions. As a result of the belletristic focus of literary criticism, these institutions of Scotland are often neglected as areas where rhetorical practices and understanding were also going through a process of change.¹ Therefore in order to rehabilitate these often ignored areas of rhetoric, three of Scotland's key institutions will be assessed with regard to the rhetorical development in this period. The first chapter in this section will address the debates and subsequent pamphlet war which preceded the Union of 1707. This was a time, of course, before Scottish rhetoric became an ingredient in civil society and as such possesses a more civic flavour. Although the general perception of the pamphlet debates has always been to dismiss them as empty propaganda that had no effect on the outcome, recent work, which has emerged in the aftermath of the tercentenary of the Union offers a more subtle appraisal of the true extent to which the debates and the pamphlet war were able to stimulate change, and secure certain concessions.² To complete a study of the

¹ As J. Blake Scott has recently acknowledged, 'Eighteenth-century belles-lettres was more expansive than what many of us may think of as fine or polite literature and letters. While it could be argued that belles-lettres was gradually narrowing, the concept could still signify the fine arts or humanities in general, which, in late eighteenth century elite education, encompassed grammar, composition, and such civic arts as rhetoric and moral philosophy'. J. Blake Scott, 'John Witherspoon's Normalizing Pedagogy of Ethos', *Rhetoric Review* 16 (1997), pp. 58-75

² For an investigation into the role of pamphlets see: Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 2002). For the traditional view of the pamphlet war see: William Ferguson, 'The Making of the Treaty of Union of 1707', *Scottish Historical Review* 43 (1964), pp. 89-110; P. W. J. Riley, 'The Union of 1707 as an Episode in English Politics', *English Historical Review* 84 (1969), pp. 498-527; P. W. J. Riley, *The Union of Scotland and England: A Study in Anglo-Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 1978); David Daiches, *Scotland and the Union* (London, 1977). More recently Karin Bowie has demonstrated that popular opposition to the Union may not have been enough to stop it, but it was sufficient to force the governments of England and Scotland to grant certain concessions: Karin Bowie, 'Public opinion, popular politics and the Union of 1707', *Scottish Historical Review* 81 (2003), pp. 226-260; Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699-1707*

rhetorical contours of the Union pamphlets in their entirety would constitute a PhD study in itself. Therefore, owing to the constraints of a doctoral thesis, I will investigate a relatively enclosed space in the pamphlet debates. The focus will be on the pamphlet exchange between Lord Belhaven, (John Hamilton), and Daniel Defoe, two of the most well known protagonists in the Union debates. The necessity of focussing on the political debates of the Union, means that the religious and economic arguments while of crucial importance to a general understanding of the debate will only be assessed *en passant*.¹

Scots Law is also significant in the development of rhetoric and literary criticism because a considerable number of the literati in the Scottish Enlightenment were members of the bar. Lord Kames was the premier figure in this arena, primarily because his *Elements of Criticism* was one of the most successful textbooks on the subject in the course of the eighteenth century, and became, like Blair's and Campbell's works, key textbooks on the University curricula in the United States. Even before this publication however, Kames demonstrated his admiration for literature and the positive benefits which the study of it could bring. In his *Historical Law Tracts* (1758) he frequently alluded to the advantages that a study of literature could provide in the study of law, but also in the study of history. Lord Hailes (David Dalrymple), Lord Monboddo (James Burnet), Gilbert Elliot of Minto, and Lord Dreghorn (John Maclaurin) were also keenly involved in literary endeavours and helped to advance the understanding of rhetoric and criticism in Scottish life. Although he lived almost one hundred years before the heyday

(Suffolk, 2007) See also: Christopher Whatley and Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh, 2006)

¹ For more on the religious considerations of Union see: David Macaree, 'Daniel Defoe, the Church of Scotland, and the Union of 1707', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7 (1973), pp. 62-77; Colin Kidd, 'Religious Realignment between the Restoration and Union', in John Robertson, ed., *A Union for Empire: Political thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 145-168; Jeffrey Stephen, 'The Kirk and the Union, 1706-7: A reappraisal', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 31 (2001), pp. 68-96; Jeffrey Stephen, *Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707* (Edinburgh, 2007)

of the literati, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh is an important figure in the study of Scottish rhetoric and criticism. As a man of letters, Mackenzie wrote the romance *Aretina* (1660) which M. R. G. Spiller has claimed as the first Scottish novel.¹ Mackenzie also provided literary criticism in his preface, along similar lines of Sir Philip Sidney's pioneering work, 'An apology for poetry, or, The defence of poesy' (1595). Mackenzie is also of interest to the rhetorician for his views on the Scottish language, which he conceived of as a vital tool in the criminal courts of Scotland owing to its style and sound. In this respect Mackenzie's observations are at odds with the literati who tried to cultivate a polite English style, but not necessarily with the Scottish lawyers, Kames, Maclaurin, and Auchinleck (the father of James Boswell), who spoke broad Scots in the court. From the perspective of legal pleading, the Scottish system is also directly linked to the written forms of rhetoric which were developed in the latter part of the eighteenth-century. This is because, the Scots legal system did not conduct its legal pleading through oral methods, but rather through written forms. Therefore an analysis of this style of pleading, and the methods which the two sides adopted in order to combat each other is necessary in order to understand how this system contributed to rhetorical development in Scotland.

The final area of analysis in this thesis will focus on religious rhetoric. The Church of Scotland was perhaps the dominant force in the country, but during the eighteenth-century it had to contend with outside pressure from the Episcopalians, as well as internal wrangling, which resulted in a schism and ultimately a secession by some of

¹ M. R. G. Spiller, 'The First Scots Novel: Sir George Mackenzie's *Aretina* (1660)', *Scottish Literary Journal* 11 (1979), pp. 1-20

its members.¹ Even those who remained within the Church of Scotland were far from united and as the century moved on, two factions appeared in the Church, the moderates, who were culturally dominant, and their opponents the popular party, who advocated a more evangelical brand of religion. The primary focus chapter six will be the rhetorical and critical practices that the moderates and popular party arrayed against each other over the *Douglas* controversy, which erupted after John Home, a minister in the Church of Scotland had written and then published a play that had also been performed on the Edinburgh stage. Although the temptation has always been to portray the clash as one between enlightened moderates and repressive evangelicals, the reality offers a tantalising conflict between two sides that deployed different critical methods in order to refute the claims of their adversaries. Because Calvinism has often been associated with the repression of the fine arts and a distaste for the ornaments of eloquence, it is necessary to investigate the early development of Calvinist thought, which upon closer inspection reveals a doctrine which, far from averse to rhetoric, was keen to employ it for the benefits which it could bring to those who used it.

By conducting this study over a broad spectrum of Scottish society in this period, this thesis will demonstrate that rhetorical practices in Scotland were both diverse and extensive, and permeated all levels of society. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that even in the early part of the eighteenth-century Scots were engaging with European thinking on rhetoric and belles-lettres, and were in turn sowing the seeds that would bloom so

¹ In his highly polemical article which still provokes furious reactions from historians Hugh Trevor-Roper suggested that the growth of Enlightenment in Scotland did not come from the Presbyterians, but from the Catholics and Episcopalians: Trevor-Roper, 'The Scottish Enlightenment', pp. 1635-1658; Mark Goldie has added to the role of Catholics in the Scottish Enlightenment in an extensive essay focusing on the role of John Geddes and Bishop George Hay: Mark Goldie, 'The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies* 30 (1991), pp. 20-62

spectacularly in the period after 1760. Another concern of this thesis is to take into account the significant strain of classical thought which runs through rhetorical development in the universities, clubs, Church, and Law in this period. For although the Scots were at the forefront of creating a new and modern discipline, they were keen to draw where they could from a classical past that could both inform and enlighten their literary investigations.

CHAPTER 1: RHETORIC AND LITERARY CRITICISM IN ABERDEEN

The University of Aberdeen has always held a unique position within the framework of Scotland's universities. Owing to its geographical position removed from that of the lowlands, and its cultural distinctiveness from Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as retaining a strongly Episcopalian, and not insignificant Catholic influence, the engines which powered the growth and development of its university ultimately took it in a direction altogether different from its lowland counterparts. A strong European influence ensured that Aberdeen remained a hotspot for humanism in this period, and as a consequence of this the education system was staunchly committed to the teaching and instruction of Latin. Both the formal study of grammar and rhetoric, as well as the practice of verse-composition were more advanced at Aberdeen than at any of the other Scottish universities at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was in this humanist climate that the mind of Thomas Ruddiman blossomed, which informed his critical, historical and Latinate perspectives even after he had left for Edinburgh.¹ Indeed, even Aberdeen's internal structure helped to foster a creative tension owing to the fact that the city accommodated two university institutions, King's College and Marischal College, located in the old and new parts of the town. Both King's and Marischal were further disrupted in the aftermath of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715 which saw the removal of faculty members with sympathies for the rebels in 1717. Despite these encroachments, both institutions remained true to the same remit: to educate students in order that they

¹ Ruddiman was educated at King's College. In 1694 he had compiled a manual of rhetoric entitled *Rhetoricum Libri Tres*. Douglas Duncan believes that only in Aberdeen could Ruddiman have grown up to accept the assumption of the Scottish humanists that Latin should be the basis of the national culture, and that Scotland's literary accomplishments in that medium should afford it a place in the world of letters. Douglas Duncan, *Thomas Ruddiman: A Study in Scottish Scholarship in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1965) see especially, chapter 2 'Aberdeen and Edinburgh'.

may thrive in the professions of the church, law, medicine and education, and in general that they may be useful members of the community. This practical usefulness that education ought to instil in the individual is clearly detectable in the emerging disciplines of rhetoric and belles-lettres which grew and flourished in Aberdeen, just as they did in Edinburgh and Glasgow. In his advice left to his students after his death the professor of Moral Philosophy David Fordyce insisted upon this practical application:

Remember that the end of all reading and learning is, To be
Wise, and good and useful Creatures.
That no man can be a good Creature who is not Religious
or a lover of God, as well as a friend to men.

In all your reading, search for truth, and seek knowledge,
not for shew or mere talk; but for use, the improvement
of your own mind, and the Advantage of others.¹

In fact, owing to the unique position in Aberdeen whereby each professor who taught some form of literature was taught by his predecessor, a pattern which stretches from David Fordyce in the mid 1740s until Herbert Grierson in the twentieth century, Joan H. Pittock has noted that this continuous intellectual descent makes Aberdeen the perfect example of the development of rhetoric and belles-lettres through to its modern guise as literary criticism in the modern university curricula.²

The most influential figure at Aberdeen to write about rhetoric was the professor of Divinity, and later Principal of Marischal College, George Campbell (1719-1796). His *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) was important to the development of the discipline because it redefined rhetoric according to the science of human nature.³ Campbell wrote

¹ David Fordyce, 'Concerning Reading', AUL, MS M. 184

² Joan H. Pittock, 'An evolutionary microcosm: The teaching of Literature and aesthetics at Aberdeen', in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 116-133

³ Richard Sher notes that Campbell's work did not actually sell that well in the eighteenth century, although it went on to do great things in the nineteenth century in both France and America. Richard B. Sher, *The*

it during the period when he attended the Philosophical Society, commonly called the Wise Club, in Aberdeen. The Wise Club was founded in 1756 by the philosopher Thomas Reid of King's College, and John Gregory of Marischal. Prominent figures in the community, such as Reid, Campbell, Alexander Gerard and James Beattie attended these twice-weekly meetings. Despite the fact that the Wise Club insisted that all questions had to be philosophical, and could not be grammatical, historical or philological, and in particular forbade criticism on style, pronunciation or composition, its members still discussed issues relating to poetry, beauty, imitation and the prevalent standard of taste. If these rules were strictly upheld the Club would have been in contradiction of the aims of all the other Scottish Literary Societies.¹ However it was unlikely that these rules were reinforced, for the inaugural lecture on March 8th 1758 was George Campbell's 'The Nature of Eloquence'.² Indeed while Campbell was there he provided eighteen such papers some of which were draft chapters of his work on rhetoric, and in turn he received

Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and their publishers in Eighteenth century Britain, Ireland and America (Chicago, 2006), p. 89

¹ D. D. McElroy, 'A Century of Scottish Clubs 1700-1800' (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1969), I, pp. 81-83. The club did take engage in rhetorical investigations: James E. Irvine, 'Rhetorical Interests in the Aberdeen Philosophical Society: Catalogue of MSS 3107/1-9, Aberdeen University Library', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 19 (1989), pp. 185-188

² Before the club's inaugural lecture the members who would go on to secure its reputation were still performing the functions which they did in subsequent years. The evidence for this is contained within Campbell's preface to the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* which states that he read the outline to friends in a literary society in the year 1757. 'In the year 1757 it was read to a private literary society, of which the Author had the honour to be a member. It was a difference in his situation at that time, and his connection with the gentlemen of that society, some of whom have since honourably distinguished themselves in the republic of letters, that induced him to resume a subject, which he had so long laid aside. The three following years all the other chapters of that Book, except the third, the sixth, and the tenth, which have been but lately added (rather as illustrations and confirmations of some parts of the work, than as essential to it) were composed, and submitted to the judgment of the same ingenious friends. All that follows on the subject of Elocution, hath also undergone the same review'. George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (2 vols., London, 1776), I, p. iv. For an analysis of Campbell's discourse see: Kathleen Holcomb, 'Wit, Humour, and Ridicule: George Campbell's First Discourse for the Aberdeen Philosophical Society', in, Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock eds., *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 282-290

suggestions from the group on it before he published his final version.¹ The influence that Campbell exerted in this field and the quality of his successors in transmitting the discipline to the continent and the Americas, most notably the nineteenth century professor Alexander Bain, has tended to overshadow the achievements of those who preceded him. Among these early figures are George Turnbull (1698-1748), David Fordyce (1711-1751), and Thomas Blackwell (1701-1757), who became the principal of Marischal in 1748 after the death of his father. While their contributions to belles-lettres have been overlooked in favour of their successors, they were warmly appreciated by their contemporaries. John Ramsay of Ochtertyre was especially glowing in his praise for the Aberdonian professors. ‘Nowhere in Scotland did science and *belles-lettres* flourish more during this period than in the two colleges of Aberdeen, and particularly in the Marischall where the good seed sown first by Blackwell and afterwards by Fordyce produced a long and abundant crop’.² Ramsay’s coupling of science and belles-lettres is significant for it is indicative of the distinct identity which Aberdeen retained throughout the century. What I mean specifically here, is that rhetoric and belles-lettres, and even the writings of pulpit oratory found in Fordyce and Campbell, were built upon scientific principles to a far greater degree than the rhetorical development found in the universities of the lowlands. At Marischal in particular, the curriculum was reorganized in line with

¹ In this case the role of Thomas Reid is crucial. While John Locke and David Hume have correctly been identified as sources for Campbell’s philosophy of human nature, D. R. Bormann has provided evidence that Reid casts a very substantial shadow over this work. This serves to reinforce the importance of literary discussion in the Aberdonian Club. D. R. Bormann, ‘Some ‘Common Sense’ about Campbell, Hume, and Reid: The extrinsic evidence’, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985), pp. 395-421. Reid himself has been the subject of recent historical reappraisal which ascribes to him a more central role in the development of Scottish Rhetoric. While not a rhetorician by trade, Reid preserved the realist foundations on which classical rhetoric had been based, and therefore exerted an important influence on those rhetorics which existed around him. William A. Wallace, ‘Thomas Reid’s Philosophy as a Basis for Rhetoric’, in, Lynee Lewis Gaillet, ed., *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (New Jersey, 1998), pp. 31-41

² John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed., William Allardyce (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1888), I, p. 469

the inductive logic of the sciences, following the proposals of Alexander Gerard who published them first of all in the *Scots Magazine* of 1752, and then in a *Plan of Education in the Marischal College* (1755). With regard to the emergence of literary criticism, Gerard was keen to emphasise the link between this discipline and the sciences. He felt that, 'the literary reading experience is educationally of central importance in developing the mind and sensibility in this new science of human nature'.¹ His logic was that if an individual was to assess poetical works he or she would eventually attain a degree of taste. By providing a student with the rules of criticism that individual would then be able to refine his or her taste which would ultimately result in improving their judgement and analytical powers. Gerard not only gave the movement of rhetoric away from logic towards literary criticism a theoretical basis in his plan, but he would subsequently build upon it when he wrote his *Essay on Taste* (1759).² Although the reforms appeared to be a revolutionary programme instigating an overhaul of the teaching procedure in the university, in reality it was the logical extension of the education system which to a degree was already employed at Marischal College which had a very strong tradition of placing science at the heart of the arts curriculum. Both Fordyce with his *Dialogues Concerning Education* (1745) and Turnbull with his *Observations upon Liberal Education* (1742) had previously provided blueprints for a new system of education.³ The evidence of this can be traced throughout the works of Turnbull, Fordyce and Blackwell who all taught well before the reforms were even put into print.

¹ Alexander Gerard, *Plan of Education in the Marischal College* (Aberdeen, 1755), p. 12

² Joan H. Pittock, 'Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the North East', in, Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock eds., *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), p. 276

³ M. A. Stewart, 'George Turnbull and Educational Reform', in, Jennifer J. Carter and Joan H. Pittock eds., *Aberdeen and the Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 95-103

The works of Thomas Blackwell for example, even though they concern themselves with mythology, ancient poetry and politics, as well as early societal development are built upon a solid rational and analytic framework, which seek to uncover literary and historical truths by the means of empirical evidence.¹ The most overt example of this form of writing can be found in his first major publication, *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), which was initially published anonymously, but owing to a favourable reception it was reprinted in 1736 with Blackwell as the acknowledged author.² In the *Enquiry*, he set himself the task of investigating the social, economic and religious variables which resulted in the creation of an individual who was able to produce poetry of superior quality to anything that had come before. He was keen to demonstrate that the society into which a person was born was the key factor in determining the attributes that an individual would possess. Thus Blackwell hypothesised,

The circumstances that may be reasonably thought to have the greatest effect upon us, may perhaps be reduced to these following: First *The State of the Country* where a Person is born and bred; in which I include the common *Manners* of the Inhabitants, their *Constitution* civil and religious, with its causes and consequences: Their *manners* are seen in the *ordinary* way of living, as it happens to be polite or barbarous, luxurious or simple. Next, the *Manners* of the Times, or the prevalent Humours and Professions in vogue: These two are publick, and have a common effect on the whole Generation. Of a more confined Nature, is, first, *Private Education*; and after that *the particular way of Life* we choose to pursue, with our *Fortunes* in it.³

¹ For an account of Blackwell's historical methodology see: Donald Foerster, 'Scottish Primitivism and the Historical Approach', *Philological Quarterly* 29 (1950), pp. 307-323; Gerald W. Chapman, ed., *Literary Criticism in England, 1660 – 1800* (New York, 1966), pp. 269-271

² For the reception of the *Enquiry* in England, see: Donald M. Foerster, *Homer in English Criticism: The Historical Approach in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1947), Appendix, 'The Reputation of Blackwell's *Enquiry* in England', pp. 124-126

³ Thomas Blackwell, *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (London, 1735), p.11

This succinct passage outlines in a nutshell the ideological position Blackwell assumed as he embarked on his odyssey to discover the origin and influences on Homer's genius. Unlike previous generations of commentators,¹ he was dissatisfied with the commonly held perception that Homer had been bestowed with a divine gift of poetic genius, and instead hypothesised that his upbringing, his experiences and simply the accident of being born at a time when Greece was in a transitional period between barbarity and civilisation, were all contributory factors in the creation of poetic genius that had never been equalled.² Moreover, he conceived of Homer's role not simply as a poet, but as a poet-historian; whose tales and fables could be read as sources for historical events and the religious belief systems of the ancients. Indeed, he even considered Homer to be the best of the Greek historians, even though he relied too much upon 'faint tradition', in his presentation of the adventures of his heroes.³ The results of Blackwell's enquiry were revolutionary not simply because of what he had to say concerning the origin of Homer's genius, but because they also ignited the flame of religion, and opened several key doors

¹ Blackwell was not the first scholar to decouple Homer from the tradition of epic rules of poetry however. The Italian scholar Giambattista Vico had done this some ten years before in *Scienza Nuova* (1725). See also, B. A. Haddock, 'Vico's Discovery of the True Homer: A Case Study in Historical Reconstruction', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40 (1979), pp. 583-602. Vico also accepted, as did Blackwell that those who lived in primitive societies were not simply to be dismissed as barbaric. The reason for this was that they were poets, who were capable of producing quality verse. See: Joseph M. Levine, 'Giambattista Vico and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52 (1991), pp. 55-79

² The Enlightenment's view of the barbaric world culminated in Germanic scholarship in the work of Friedrich August Wolf who published his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795). Wolf demonstrated that the poems attributed to Homer were in actual fact merely compilations of fragments. Homer himself was nothing more than the conglomeration of these fragments personified as a bard. Homer has of course returned, but now he is a metaphor rather than a man, who represents the fact that we read both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as complete works rather than fragments. Frank Manuel has put forward the idea that Wolf would have been influenced by Blackwell's work on Homer because he depicted him as an expression of the Greek poetic spirit at the moment of its emergence from barbarism but before the over-refinement of civilized society crushed spontaneous feeling. Manuel views this as an English conception of Homer, but in reality this viewpoint is at the very least British, for Robert Wood's *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (1769) follows in the footsteps of Blackwell. Frank E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth-Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959), pp. 302-303. Blackwell was also a strong influence on the German scholar Gottfried von Herder, who often referred to the Aberdeen professor enthusiastically in his own writings.

³ Blackwell, *Enquiry*, pp. 320-321

to the embryonic discipline of literary criticism which would become so dominant in the later eighteenth-century under the guidance of Blair, Smith and Campbell. Blair, it would seem, overlooked Blackwell's conclusions concerning the nature of Homer's genius. In his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* he struck rigidly to the orthodox viewpoint stating, 'Homer, it is more than probable, was acquainted with no systems of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone, he composed in verse a regular story which all posterity has admired'.¹ Blair was certainly aware of Blackwell and of his writings, and he even mentioned him and all of his published works in his *Lectures*. Blackwell, as we will see, would go on to draw a very different picture of Homer's innate genius.

Although his conclusions were not universally adopted, Blackwell's system, which he used initially to investigate the background of Homer, became the staple of eighteenth-century literary criticism. Blackwell's thorough investigation through the seemingly incongruous prisms of science, art, nature and society effectively upheld the true aims of rhetoric and belles-lettres before these ideas had become mainstream. His focus on the development of the human being in order to analyse how this impacted on their poetry, engages with wider Enlightenment concerns, such as the development of man, and illustrates that Blackwell represented the true spirit of the Enlightenment because he engaged in a myriad of investigations to serve his work more effectively. In this regard Blackwell was more forward-thinking than his professorial counterpart at King's College, John Ker. Ker, who taught Greek there from 1717 to 1734 was determined to keep the traditions of Scots humanism alive in the university curriculum. He belonged to the circle that included both Ruddiman and Archibald Pitcairne, and he

¹ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (3 vols., Dublin, 1783), I, p. 45

composed Latin verse in the same manner as the Scots humanists.¹ Ruddiman published his *Donaides* (1725) which celebrated the King's graduate James Fraser; he also published his *Cantici Solomonis Paraphrasis Gemina* (1727), and both works demonstrate the style of Latinity which Ruddiman wished to preserve in Scotland. The course which Ker ran at the university remains uncertain; however it is more than likely that his classroom teaching would have focussed on the rudiments of Greek.² This is because Greek itself was very much subordinate to Latin, not only in the north east but in Scotland in general. In 1700 a parliamentary commission had stipulated that in the first year, professors of Greek were to teach only the Greek grammar and proper Greek authors, without teaching so much as any structura, syllogismi, or anything else which belonged to the course of philosophy.³ Even if Ker made some innovations to his Greek course when he became professor, there is no suggestion that he instructed his students in the history and culture of ancient Greece in the same way that Blackwell did at Marischal College.

As a consequence of this system of investigation, and his desire to question accepted doctrine, there is an alarming tendency to distort and misinterpret Blackwell's original aims. Such an incident occurred within the first year of publication. The Reverend Charles Peters, a minor English clergyman in Cornwall, seized upon Blackwell's interpretation of Homer as a product of his society, and unaffected by a divine gift, to suggest that such a viewpoint had a potentially destabilising effect on

¹ For more on the Ker, Ruddiman circle see: George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman* (London, 1794), pp. 98-99

² For more on the early teaching of Greek in Scottish universities see: M. A. Stewart, 'The Origin of the Scottish Greek Chairs', in, E. M. Craik, ed., *'Owls to Athens': Essays on Classical subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 391-400

³ Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1993), p. 56

modern religion. Blackwell's conclusion that the religion of the ancients was less divinely inspired and more artificially constructed by man, implied to Peters, that he was suggesting the same could be said for the Church in the eighteenth-century. Given the incendiary climate of the time when the Church was attempting to deal with the harmful affects of Deism, Socinianism and Arianism, it is understandable to see why Peters reacted as he did.¹ Blackwell himself made no apology for his belief in the ancient construction of mythology, and he expressed himself most clearly on the matter in his work, *Letters Concerning Mythology* (1748): 'The wise and learned of the Ancients did not believe their Gods to be Persons, nor understood literally their personal Qualities and Adventures'.² Although he was an intimate of Blackwell's David Fordyce condemned the *Letters* as a frivolous undertaking. In a letter to George Benson he wrote, 'I cannot help thinking there is too much learning thrown away on so trite and stale a Subject and which after all is rather curious than useful'.³ His intention was most definitely not to shake the foundations of the established Church, but to illustrate how the ancient worldview contributed to the type of literature which it produced. In this case the allegorical qualities of the Gods and immortals of the ancient world served as vehicles for fables and moral stories of a kind such as Aesop produced. As these stories were re-creating the metaphorical use of language in the same way that the gods themselves were viewed as metaphors, one may say that literature itself is the descendent of mythology. This connection is stronger than it first appears if one remembers that mythology is etymologically descended from the Greek 'mythos', which can be translated as a tale or a

¹ For the best account of these dangers to religion in Britain in this period, see: J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge, 1994)

² Thomas Blackwell, *Letters Concerning Mythology* (London, 1748), p. 64

³ David Fordyce to George Benson, 10th October 1748, MUL MS BI.13

story. Blackwell did not word it in these terms, but he clearly understood the link between the two, and developed his point further by stating, 'Mythology in general, is *Instruction conveyed in a Tale*. A Fable or mere Legend without a Moral, or if you please without a Meaning, can with little Propriety deserve the Name'.¹ As a consequence, myth has a unifying function in Blackwell's works. On one hand myth as a story entertains and informs the listener or reader, but on the other the moral contained within the story has a particular social function, and therefore it encourages the recipient to a virtuous course of action specific to that society. One should not make the mistake of thinking that because he viewed the Gods as allegories Blackwell equated all poetry with mythology. He realised that poetry could just as easily be historically conditioned, but conceived that mythic poetry dealt with those things which would forever change, and remain unchanged. He also believed that the true power of mythology required both reason as well as 'starts of passion'.² In this respect mythology contained both the instruction that was required to render the story useful, which was reinforced by his insistence on reason, but at the same time entertained and excited the reader with an engrossing tale, which is where the 'starts of passion' come in. His observations had a significant bearing on the emergent forms of literature in the eighteenth-century, encapsulated in the romance novel. The growing concern over these works as immoral and corrosive to a weak mind should it become exposed to them was an issue that would trouble later literary critics such as James Beattie. Beattie was a pupil of Blackwell's who desired to draw a distinction between the instructive and morally sound works of writers such as Cervantes, and his English inheritors along the lines of Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Defoe, and

¹ Blackwell, *Letters*, p. 70

² 'Thomas Blackwell', in, Burton Feldman and Robert D. Richardson, *The Rise of Modern Mythology 1680-1860* (London, 1972), pp. 99-102

the more degenerate literature which was pervading eighteenth-century society. To this group, although Beattie did not admit him, one may add Tobias Smollett, who borrowed greatly from the classical past to energise his novels but who was also at pains to alert the reader to the dangers of simply imitating classical forms as a means of attaining moral excellence.

For Peters, however, the line of enquiry which Blackwell pursued meant that Homer himself had been misinterpreted, and in order to combat this he felt a closer inspection of Homer's original works were in order,

In order to combat it thoroughly, I think I can't do better than study Homer himself and get him by Heart – Particularly to Consider his Theology, without regard to his Commentators or the Opinions of after times, but as it appears in Homer himself.¹

Although Peters arrives at very different conclusions about the nature of Homer and his works, his decision to investigate these issues in this manner is representative of the power of Blackwell's literary criticism. His fluid arguments and cogent line of enquiry were engines of debate which had the capacity to fuel likeminded scholars so that literary criticism formed an ongoing process; a freedom of independent thinking and thus it was a perfect platform for exchanging ideas and opinions. In this respect Blackwell engaged in a wider enlightenment ideal than simply criticism for its own sake. It demonstrates the original intentions of this emergent discipline were shaped not in the so-called golden age of enlightenment under the guidance of Blair and Smith, but were in fact being given solid foundation by Scottish scholars a generation before.

¹ Charles Peters, 'Meditations of the Reverend Charles Peters', quoted in, David Allan, 'Opposing Enlightenment: Reverend Charles Peters's Reading of the Natural History of Religion', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38 (2005), p. 309

Although Peters's basis for criticising the work of Blackwell arose from the misinterpretation that he was a radical free thinker and potentially a Deist, when in actual fact he was a Presbyterian, this does not detract from the attempts which he made to answer Blackwell. David Allan argues that Peters's contribution is more revealing of contemporary intellectual currents, as he clearly identifies the logical fault lines in the British Enlightenment's frequent claims about the extraordinary capabilities of primitive societies.¹ While Allan's observations may be astute about the general enthusiasm over the virtues of primitive societies, his attempt to include Blackwell in this group is misplaced. His assertion that 'in the 1730s in relation to the speculative account of Greek religion produced by Macpherson's teacher [Blackwell], it strained credulity that genuinely primitive people should have evinced such unmistakeable cultural signs of a refined and, by definition, advanced civilisation',² can be rejected on the grounds that Blackwell himself was fully aware of the dangers of allocating an excess of civilized ideals onto the model of primitive society. In the *Enquiry* he stated:

It is plain that any language, from as above described [from barbarous verse through to refined prose] must be full of Metaphor; and that Metaphor of the boldest, daring and most natural kind: For words taken wholly from rough Nature, and invented under some Passion, as Terror, Rage or Want (which readily extort Sounds from Men) would be expressive of that Fanaticism and Dread, which is incident to Creatures living wild and defenceless.³

Consequently their speech would be broken and unequal and one word or sound would reflect many sounds or ideas, which Blackwell believed the people of his time were apt to mistake for strength of expression, but which in reality he perceived as a defect and a

¹ David Allan, 'Opposing Enlightenment', p. 308

² *Ibid.*, p. 309

³ Blackwell, *Enquiry*, pp. 41-42

limit on the expressive power of the language. Clearly then Blackwell was more than just an apologist for the classicists and a willing follower of perceived notions about the virtues of primitive societies. He possessed a more subtle line of enquiry than, say, Adam Ferguson writing thirty years later in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), as he was capable of recognising that the barbarous state of a primitive society would be reflected in the barbarity of its speech, and he was at pains to point out that this simplicity of expression should not be interpreted as the result of a simple and untainted moral centre.

It is indicative of modern scholarship which distorts the reality of enlightenment thinkers by labelling them with convenient stereotypes to conform to accepted accounts of Scottish historical development. Blackwell's unique observations on the development of primitive society and the personal development of Homer demonstrate that he was pursuing his own independent line of enquiry and was not reacting to common eighteenth-century conceptions of ancient societies. Despite incorporating a number of caveats into his work, it is evident that he is still observed through a distorted prism of modern interpretation.

The use of metaphor, alluded to earlier, is a key concept in understanding how Blackwell viewed the development of primitive societies. He was keen to show that metaphor was closely bound to the early forms of religion in the ancient world, which accounted for the large number of deities that existed within these societies:

Signs and symbols are sometimes brought into play, and Instruction is conveyed by significant Ceremonies, and even by material Representations. The first and simplest flows from pure untaught Nature; a Similitude, a Metaphor, is an Allegory in Embryo, which extended

and animated will become a perfect piece of full-grown
mythology.¹

The literary critic Northrop Frye identified a similar idea that primitive societies as a result of a heavy reliance on metaphorical language consequently transferred the values of this system into the creation of a multitude of Gods to populate their society. Frye states:

In metaphorical language the central conception which unifies human thought and imagination is the conception of a plurality of gods, or embodiments of the identity of personality and nature. In metonymic language this unifying conception becomes a monotheistic 'God' a transcendent reality or a perfect being that all verbal analogy points to.²

Frye argues that as language becomes more sophisticated the metaphorical language of the primitive society gives way to the more subtle language of simile and shifts towards a more dialectic approach which in turn allows for a better understanding of how divine agents operate. This idea is expressed most emphatically by David Hume in his 'Natural History of Religion' (1757), but it was a concept which Blackwell had anticipated in the 1730s during his investigations into the literary devices of the ancients. Adam Smith followed a similar line of inquiry when he argued that barbarous societies were adept at producing poetry because that was the only form of literary expression open to them, whereas they had not been able to produce any pieces of tolerable prose on the grounds that this was the domain of the civilised society.³ Ironically to illustrate his point

¹ Blackwell, *Letters*, p. 70

² Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (London, 1982), p. 9

³ In discussing the movement from barbarism to modernity with allusion to Scots literature Smith remarked, 'We have also severall poetical works in the old Scots Language, as Hardyknute, Cherry, and the Slae, Tweeside, Lochaber, and Wallace Wight in the originall Scotts but not one bit of tolerable prose. The Erse poetry as appears from the translations lately published have very great merit but we never heard of any Erse prose. This indeed may appear very unnatural that what is most difficult should be that in which the Barbarous least civilised nations most excell in'. Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed., J. C. Bryce (Oxford, 1983), p. 136

Blackwell used the Shakespearian phrase 'the world's a stage'. It is a simple enough phrase when it stands alone, however when subjected to an enlargement process, it grows to encompass its own mythology. For example, on the theatre a new piece is played everyday and the man who was the spectator may now become the actor, while fortune is the director of events and assigns roles to the protagonists, be they kings, peasants, warriors or poets. Such an interpretation serves to bolster Blackwell's belief that the reason the ancients had constructed their system of mythology was rooted in the very language which they spoke and the residue of this mythology, now defunct, was evident in the literature which had survived to the present day. There is a second point to be made here, as it also reinforces the fact that Blackwell was not destabilising any religious foundations, as he was arguing that it was the language which resulted in the artificial construction of the gods, and not the absence of a divine power which so worried Reverend Peters.

Blackwell proceeded to solidify his position with regard to the importance of metaphor by stating:

Now *Metaphor* is the Produce of all Nations especially of the Eastern; People given to Taciturnity, of strong Passions, fiery Fancies, and therefore seldom opening their Mouth, but in dark Sayings and mystic Parables. For Metaphor is the Language of *Passion*; simile is the Effect of a *warm Imagination*, which when *cooled* and *regulated* explains itself in diffuse Fable and elaborate Allegory.¹

This is one of the reasons why the works of Homer abound both in Metaphor and Simile, as they represented to Blackwell what effect Homer's education had had on his literary technique. More revolutionary was his subtle use of 'Fancy' and 'Imagination'. Although it appears fairly innocuous, fancy is aligned with the passions and the primitive society. It

¹ Blackwell, *Letters*, p. 71

represents the ability to imagine, but in a fairly barbarous manner. In contrast 'warm Imagination' is aligned with reason and sophisticated language and works that can be found in the eighteenth century. Blackwell was careful to add that this imagination must be cooled if it was to be of service in the production of acceptable forms of modern literature; to keep the imagination warm without this regulation was to descend into a state of fancy where the emotions would take over. This statement not only related to the debate on reason and passion, but it did so in advance of statements such as David Hume's 'reason is and always will be the slave of the passions'. To Blackwell the two may remain separate if the author is disciplined enough to regulate himself, and the evidence can be seen in the great works of literature that exist in the world. This engagement of enlightenment concerns through the medium of literary criticism was something which Blackwell was pioneering at this stage.

In Blackwell's eyes, Homer's muse was the world around him. According to Gregory Hollingshead: 'His passion is essentially an actor's or a mimic's... [he] says little or nothing from himself. NATURE is the surest Rule, and *real Characters* the best ground of Fiction: The passions of the Augustan Mind if truly awakened and kept up by objects fitted to them, dictate a Language peculiar to themselves'.¹ While Hollingshead recognises that the mythology contained in these works is not an accessory to the truth of the poem, but is in fact the poetry itself, one should be careful when referring to the imitative technique which Blackwell ascribed to Homer. A distinction needs to be drawn between base imitation which resulted in poor quality and derivative literature and a

¹ Gregory Hollingshead, 'Berkeley, Blackwell and Blackwell's Homer', *Scottish Literary Journal* 11 (1984), p. 25. Bishop Berkeley was very much aware of the Scottish grasp of his philosophy, and he was on good terms with several members of the Rankenian Club. He was also a friend of Blackwell's and attempted to persuade him to take a chair in his projected university in Bermuda.

higher power upon which he bestowed the title: Emulation. In the first instance, mere imitation was a corrosive force which was not only detrimental to the production of poetry but could affect otherwise gifted writers. Emulation on the other hand permitted works of high quality to be produced which were true representations of nature and the natural world.

Here Blackwell used manners as the framework on which both imitation and emulation were to be placed. He asserted:

I venture to affirm, 'That a poet describes nothing so happily,
as what he has seen, nor talks masterly, but in his native
Language, and proper Idiom; nor mimics truly other Manners,
than those whose Originals has practised and known.'¹

Blackwell believed that this was a harsh but accurate statement on writers, both in ancient times and through to the modern age. The key to writing good literature was to attempt nothing more than to record the natural manners of the world around you. Ultimately it is a simple act to do, but requires exceptional manners in order to produce lasting works of greatness.

Blackwell proceeded to cite a modern example as a caveat against the slavish adherence to classical systems by the moderns. He cited no less a figure than the gifted Italian man of letters, Pietro Bembo (1470-1547). Bembo was a scholar poet from a Venetian family who became a cardinal in 1539. Indeed, his Latin works proved to be highly popular, and were a model for those who followed him; such was his influence that the word 'Bembismo' even became a catchword.² Blackwell's problem with Bembo was that he took it upon himself to write the history of Italy based on the classical style, and in particular of a Latin annal, and in doing so, he not only ended up producing a

¹ Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 29

² Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (Oxford, 1976), p. 135

servile copy of the work, but also transposed a great deal of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies of the imitated style. As a result of this a man with half the talent of Bembo could have produced a better work in the native dialect.¹ Blackwell's words bore a striking resemblance to those of John Witherspoon uttered half a century later on the same subject:

There neither is nor ever was, any speaker free from defects, or blemishes of some kind. Yet servile imitators never fail to copy the defects as well as the beauties. I should suppose, that anyone who made Cicero his particular model, would very probably transfuse a proportion of his variety and ostentation, and probably more of that than of his fire.²

This agreement on the dangers of imitation, despite coming at opposite ends, of the century illustrates the consensus which was forming in eighteenth-century literary criticism concerning the use of the classics in the modern age. Blackwell's distaste for those who would simply copy because it inevitably led to inferior work was ironically incorporated into Hugh Blair's *Lectures* in direct reference to the Marischal professor. Blair likened him to Lord Shaftesbury, and argued that although both of these men possessed undoubted literary qualities, they also exhibited a considerable number of blemishes which an imitator of their style would have copied.³ Of Blackwell, Blair asserted,

Nothing is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators, than an author, who, with many imposing beauties, has also some very considerable blemishes. This is fully exemplified in Mr. Blackwall of Aberdeen, the author of the *Life of Homer*, the *Letters on Mythology*, and the *Court of Augustus*; a writer

¹ Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 31

² John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (9vols., Edinburgh, 1804-1805), VII, p. 170

³ The link between Blackwell and Shaftesbury goes beyond just a similarity of styles. Lois Whitney has pointed to the debt which Blackwell owes the English Philosopher. Lois Whitney, 'Thomas Blackwell, a Disciple of Shaftesbury', *Philological Quarterly* 5 (1926), pp. 197-199

of considerable learning, and of ingenuity also; but infected with an extravagant love of an artificial Style, and of that parade of language which distinguishes the Shaftsburean manner.¹

Despite the fact that it is Blackwell who is on the receiving end of the criticism in this instance his own writings on the subject indicate how forward thinking he was in this regard, as he was articulating mainstream ideas in print, long before the literati of the 1760s really advanced the tenets of this discipline; even though he himself was a victim of such criticism. His view also serves as a microcosm for successful literary production in eighteenth-century Scotland: a healthy understanding and appreciation of the classics, while at the same time being aware of the dangers of imitating them too rigidly. There was in fact a seventeenth century precedent for such a production of literature which was exploited by James Philip (1656-1713), who in his Latin epic *The Grameid* (1691), told the story of the battle of Killiecrankie in 1689, and its hero Viscount Graham of Dundee. Although the main classical influence on the poem was Lucan's *Pharsalia*, it was richly flavoured with Virgil and Horace. Writing on Philip's epic, H. F. Morland Simpson has cautioned that, 'the imitations of the classics are obvious, but read rather as 'memories' than slavish imitations'.² Clearly then, while the classics were a vital part of producing quality literature in the modern age, a degree of skill was required if poets and authors were to avoid literature saturated with classical influences which had little to say to a modern audience. Such a fate befell William Wilkie and Thomas Blacklock, who produced poetry too much in the style of the ancients to have much resonance with that

¹ Blair, *Lectures*, II, pp. 44-45 Blackwell was aware of his weakness for imitating Shaftesbury's style too closely. 'I... confess to you that I have a Prejudice in favours of my Lord Shaftesbury. He fell into my hands when I was very young and put Literature and all sorts of Knowledge in such a Light to me as I think I ought almost out of Gratitude be blind to his Faults or, as my Friends', have a great inclination to excuse them.' Blackwell to John Clerk of Penecuik 5 Feb 1731 NAS GD 18/5036/9

² H. F. Morland Simpson in James Philip, *The Grameid*, (Edinburgh, 1888), p. xliii

audience. While Blacklock's works are of interest for what they have to say about contemporary society, Wilkie's epic poem, *The Epigoniad* (1757) is striking in this regard, for in his preface he directly argued against the prevailing enlightenment orthodoxy that one should draw inspiration from nature in order to produce the best poetic effusions. Instead, he proclaimed that, 'Epic poetry ought always to be taken from periods too early to fall within the reach of true history... characters must be magnified, and accommodated rather to our notions of heroic greatness, than to the real state of human nature'.¹ His inability to recognise that the essence of such success depended upon the succinct representation of human nature in many ways doomed his epic before it had even started. Conversely, it helps to explain the success of a poet such as Fergusson who was classically educated, but who saw the need to add a Scottish flavour to his work, in effect creating a vernacular classicism. And the same can also be said of Blackwell's contemporary Allan Ramsay who translated some Odes of Horace into modern Scottish verse.

Emulation on the other hand is imperative to the success of the poet. Blackwell stated that emulation was a contributory factor in the perfection of every art and science, and was a prevalent feature in the successful bards of the ancient world. He believed that the golden age of Greek and Roman literature had occurred in no small part owing to the emulation of previous works. However it should be noted that on this occasion Blackwell did let his guard slip momentarily, when he stated that Euripides, Aeschylus, and Sophocles were all *divinely* inspired.² He did not offer any indication as to why this may be the case, while Homer remained a product of his society. However, after this mention

¹ William Wilkie, *The Epigoniad* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. vi

² Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 74

of the power of the gods to influence writers, he refrained from doing so again during the course of the *Enquiry*.

In certain respects Homer's genius had arisen from the absence of a formal education, and because of this he was in a better position to emulate nature with a greater degree of reality:

The powers of Nature, and Human Passions made the Subject; and they described their various Effects with some Analogy and Resemblance to *Human Actions*. They begin with the *Rise* of Things, their Vicissitudes and Transformations, defined their nature and Influence; and in their metaphorical Stile, gave to each *Person*, a *Speech*, and *Method of operation*, conformable to their fancied *Qualities*. Nor is there any other kind of Learning to be met with in *Homer*.¹

The key ingredients are present in this evaluation of Homer's development. For example, 'the powers of Nature', the 'Human Passions' and the 'metaphorical Stile' all emphasise the primitive element in Homer's writing. Again the language available to the poet is a key factor, and 'fancy' appears in close proximity to metaphor, indicating a link between the two. Ultimately though, Homer was not limited only to metaphor. On its own metaphor is capable of aiding in the composition of good literature, but the genius of Homer lay in his ability to mix the two. This is something which Homer's innate genius had permitted him to do, but the opportunity to do so had only arisen because he was fortunate enough to be born at this transitional period. Homer was aided by the manners of his nation, as this was the thing which formed the characters of the people he would encounter, and it also animated the language which they used. Blackwell was at pains to point out the manners which were fit for poetry, and that all forms of writing, but especially poetry relied on the manners of the age. Most obvious were noble and heroic

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 101

qualities. For the purposes of Epic poetry the harsh times in which Homer would have existed made him the perfect commentator on the militaristic past of the ancient Greeks, as a residue of that period was carried into his lifetime. Equally, epic poetry cannot be produced by a wholly refined culture. For example, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were written by Homer in a period which Blackwell identified as existing between primitive and civilised. Therefore the more violent aspects of the work could be accurately reflected on the grounds that he was simply emulating what had occurred around him. Equally Virgil composed the *Aeneid* around a time of civil strife and bloody transition; therefore he too had accurately represented the struggles which he endeavoured to relate in his work. Finally, Blackwell cemented his argument by referencing a modern comparison: Milton's *Paradise Lost*. An epic to stand shoulder to shoulder with the works of antiquity, but forged in the same manner by a man who lived and was writing during the bloody tribulations of the English civil war. It would appear on this evidence then, that Blackwell's literary criticism was not solely located in an antiquated past, but was a vital machine for criticising modern literary compositions. Men such as Milton and Shakespeare were precisely the sort of figures who were employed by the literati of the later Enlightenment to bolster the position of the moderns, most notably in the case of Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762). In this instance it would appear that Blackwell, who has often been relegated to the one-dimensional position of 'an ancient' simply because he wrote on classical ideas, was in fact using his system to investigate more than the literary productions of the ancients. It was a viable model for the investigation of any literary figure, and the factors that resulted in them producing the type of literature that they did. It was a template which laid the foundations for modern

literary criticism in the enlightenment, and at the same time still had something to offer during its Golden age after the 1750s.

Blackwell demonstrated that Homer's poetic system was drawn from ἀοιδός – a singer, or a bard. So while he drew from this bardic tradition, he populated his works with characters from nature and real life. This means he grafted his own experiences onto a body of work previously established. As a result of this he was able to draw out similes from his tradition in order to produce these new works. The profession that Homer possessed would appear to have no modern counterpart, according to Blackwell:

That we should have no modern character like it: For I should be unwilling to admit the Irish or Highland Runers to a share of the Honour; tho' their Business which is to entertain a Company with their recital of some Adventure, resembles a part of the other.¹

It would be imprudent to detect an anti-Irish or anti-Highland outlook on Blackwell's part to deny these people the right to take their place alongside Homer.² Instead what Blackwell stated in reality was that in the modern age, even in areas which had retained the older customs, they were still not at the same stage in history as Homer had been. He went on to dismiss the claims of modern countries to the position of the inheritors of Homer's profession.

Blackwell alluded to the development of the language as a vital engine in this process: 'When by progression... the Greek language was brought to express all the best and bravest of human Feelings, and retained a sufficient quantity of its *Original*,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112. For an analysis of why Blackwell rejected this group of poets from his canon, see: Neil R. Grobman, 'Thomas Blackwell's Commentary on the Oral Nature of Epic', *Western Folklore* 38 (1979), pp. 186-198

² There are some legitimate comparisons to be made with the highlanders of Scotland and the primitive peoples of ancient Greece as they are represented in the *Enquiry*. See: Duane Coltharp, 'History and the Primitive: Homer, Blackwell and the Scottish Enlightenment', *Eighteenth Century Life* 19 (1995), pp. 57-69

Amazing, Metaphorick Tincture; at that point of time did Homer write'.¹ Here the growth and decline of poetry was actually bound to the growth and decline of the poet's own country. Blackwell charted a linguistic development whereby the Greek language moved from monosyllables – uttered out of strong passion, but which progressed to a refined and flexible speech before succumbing to effeteness. In a similar fashion, manners moved from brutishness to usefulness then to a pinnacle of refinement before suffering from over-refinement. Blackwell's belief in the metamorphoses of the Greek language in this period, which added another layer to the poetical armoury of Homer, was in sharp contrast to the later writings of James Burnett, Lord Monboddoo, who in his substantial six volume, *Of the Origins and Progress of Language* (1774-1789) voiced his concerns about the decay of language at a Europe-wide level. Monboddoo actually had a strong link with Blackwell, for he was his student while at Marischal College, and the Greek instruction which the professor delivered, instilled the future judge with a deep affinity for ancient culture and society. As an unabashed ancient, Monboddoo esteemed the Latin and Greek languages as the most perfect models for emulation. However, he conceded that even these languages were far from perfect. He hypothesised that language itself was an unnatural state for man, an artificial construct; but a necessary one, as mankind had to find ways of communicating in order to exchange ideas and goods.² Blackwell as he

¹ Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 46

² Lord Monboddoo, *Of the Origins and Progress of Language* (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1774-1789). As a champion of the ancients Monboddoo promoted both Latin but especially Greek as the most perfect languages. However, only strict regulation of them would allow them to remain so. Unlike some of his fellow countrymen, he did not appear to have a paranoia about Scots, but only for the reason that he held English in equally small regard. Monboddoo warned that if the contemporary youth were not instructed in the grammar of their country, the language itself would become barbarous. 'It is chiefly by such neglect that all the present languages of Europe are become corrupt dialects of languages that were originally good; the French, Italian, and Spanish and Modern Greek, from the Latin and Greek; the English, German and other Teutonic dialects, of the Gothic. Nor is what remains of the Celtic, as far as I am informed, free of corruption'. Monboddoo, *Origins*, II, p. 494

sought to show Homer as a man comfortable between two worlds, was himself at home in a dual role. He drew a closer line of analysis between primitivism and classicism than modern criticism would wish to allocate, while at the same time he avoided the potential pitfall of believing that primitive societies were bestowed with a moral sense well in advance of what they would have possessed.¹ Robert Crawford has astutely observed that Blackwell's Homer, is 'Janus-faced... born between a time of "Nakedness and Barbarity" and one of "Order and Established Discipline"... an eighteenth-century Aberdonian and more generally an eighteenth century Scot'.² Crucially Blackwell championed this duality and in fact it was the very basis in accounting for Homer's unique genius. Therefore it comes as a surprise that the duality spoken of so positively by someone such as Blackwell, becomes in later years a stick with which to beat the identity of the Scots. Placed in its original context however, this is an example to all how a Scottish writer is able to identify duality and articulate it in a favourable light. Furthermore, Blackwell's sensitive handling of this issue is representative of a man who is himself able to project a confident identity in his writing. One needs to re-locate Blackwell in an ongoing process of confident expressions of duality, rather than dismiss such thinkers and writers as schizophrenic and confused over the issues about which they were writing. Here for example, Blackwell has aided the exchange of ideas simply because he can understand where Homer has come from and how he had developed, as he is himself between two worlds. This also helps to explain why Crawford is able to detect the hint of an eighteenth-century Aberdonian in Blackwell's ancient Bard.

¹ For the role of primitivism in Blackwell's works see, Lois Whitney, 'English Primitivistic Theories of Epic Origins', *Modern Philology* 21 (1924), pp. 337-378; Roy Harvey Pearce, 'The Eighteenth Century Scottish Primitivists: Some Reconsiderations', *English Literary History* 12 (1945), pp. 203-20

² Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature* (Oxford, 2000), p. 19

The emphasis on manners reflects the extent to which Blackwell used the two systems in harmony. The progression of manners which permitted Homer to produce such literature follows a stadialist model reminiscent of that employed by Hugh Blair when he wrote his *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, Son of Fingal* (1763).¹ While Blackwell did not go as far as to outline the four stages of society he did chart a progression from barbarity through to prosperity, and it was between these ages, free from barbarity, but equally free from luxury and wealth that provided the perfect literary climate for the Bard. In Blackwell's eyes the State could disguise the man, and wealth and luxury could disguise nature. This civilising process produced polished prose, but it did not lend itself to heroic poetry. Ironically he stated that this was the case because, 'sublimer forms than war do not make a suitable subject for the heroic poem'.² The sublime element would later be restored to ancient poetry through the discovery of the Ossianic poems, and the lessons which Blackwell taught were certainly not lost on James Macpherson. He attended Marischal College not long after Blackwell published his *Letters Concerning Mythology* and there were frequent instances in the Ossianic poems where Blackwell's influence was evident. Although Macpherson ultimately forged a part of the works attributed to the third century bard, the fact remains that he tapped into the eighteenth-century zeitgeist, and this was evidenced by the phenomenal success of the poems, not only before they were found to be forgeries, but after, as well. Blackwell had already anticipated some of the elements, which would make the Ossianic poems so popular, in the 1730s, and the most celebrated aspects of the poetry can be found to have

¹ For more on stadial theory see: H. Höpfl, 'From savage to Scotsman: conjectural history in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Journal of British Studies* 17 (1978), pp. 19-40; Colin Kidd, 'Subscription, the Scottish Enlightenment and the Moderate Interpretation of History', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55 (2004), pp. 502-519

² Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 29

roots in his works. Initially the frequent use of simile which can be detected on almost any page of the poems, echoes the statement that Blackwell had made regarding the progress of language and his division of metaphor and simile. Often the similes are piled upon each other: 'The King's dark brows were like clouds. His eyes like meteors of the night'.¹ In his *Critical Dissertation*, Blair drew specific attention to the number of these similes which were deployed in the poetry. 'No poet abounds more in similes than Ossian. There are in this collection, as many, at least, as in the whole *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer. Ossian's are without exception, taken from objects of dignity'.² The magic of Ossian to eighteenth-century protagonists was his ability to mix the epic and the sublime, without sacrificing the power of his writing. Macpherson frequently employed metaphor too in his work, and located Ossian in a period similar to Homer, not in terms of linear progression, but in the state of their respective societies. The fact that the Scots literati claimed Ossian existed in a similar period is in no small part owing to Blackwell establishing the principle that a poet born at the time of Homer was a poet ideally placed to write epic poetry of a timeless quality, almost thirty years before the poems of Ossian emerged. This is reinforced by Macpherson's frequent use of metaphors, although they do not appear as frequently as the similes, and this in itself indicated the desire of the author to project an image of his bard as one who possessed a cool and regulated imagination, rather than one who was ruled by his passions. By engaging with immediate enlightenment concerns, not only on a Scottish or British level but on a European one, Macpherson demonstrated that he was adept at responding to the literary climate of the

¹ James Macpherson, *Ossian: The Epics of Fingal, and Temora* (Llanerch, 1997), p. 33

² Hugh Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian Son of Fingal* (Edinburgh, 1763), p. 426

time, and the techniques which he employed in order to promote his work are clearly evident in the works of Blackwell.

The dismissal of the Ossianic poems as purely forgeries distracts the impartial observer from recognising the literary ability of Macpherson, and his skill in shaping the fashionable ideas of the age into a work which swept all of Europe. Ossian effectively embodied the Noble Savage of Rousseau¹ and provided Scotland with a literary figure powerful enough to challenge Homer as the greatest bard in history.² Kirsti Simonsuuri states that, 'Macpherson's achievement was to have linked the primitivist interest with a keen awareness of contemporary taste as it was exemplified during the century in the

¹ For the links between Rousseau and the Scots see: Peter France, 'Primitivism and Enlightenment: Rousseau and the Scots', *Yearbook of English Studies* 15 (1985), pp. 64-79

² The European influence of the Ossianic poetry should not be allowed to pass without mention. For while the Scottish critics such as Malcolm Laing began to rail against the inauthentic nature of the poems, which ultimately resulted in the Scottish psyche associating them with forgery and embarrassment, they were highly influential in the development of vernacular literatures across Europe. In Germany both Herder and Goethe appreciated the literature. In Italy, where the classical writers Virgil and Horace held a virtual stranglehold over literary culture, the poems of Ossian, translated into Italian by Melchior Cesarotti provided a bulwark for literary freedom. S. N. Cristea asserts that Ossian, 'is inextricably bound up with the ancients v. moderns controversy. Ossian stands for freedom of thought and expression, freedom from the rules and the predominant notion of imitation'. S. N. Cristea, 'Ossian v. Homer: An eighteenth-century controversy', *Italian Studies* 24 (1969), p. 111. In France, Napoleon was known to be an admirer of the poems even after they had been dismissed as forgeries. They were translated into French by the Marquis de Saint-Simon, who labelled Ossian the 'Scottish Homer', Denis Diderot even provided part of a translation for the Shillic and Vinvela episode, which was later revised by Jean-Baptiste Antoine Suard. Suard even responded favourably to the Scottish critical machinery which had built up around Ossian. He published many of his Ossianic translations and thoughts in the *Journal étranger*, including his 'Réflexions préliminaires sur l'histoire et le caractère de ces poèmes' (1761) which was inspired by Hugh Blair's anonymous preface to the Fragments published in 1760. The Ossianic phenomenon was provided a crucial boost to the emergence of Scottish belles-lettres in France. Pierre Carboni goes as far as to say that, 'Blair's fame as Ossian's earliest and most favourable critic indirectly popularized Scottish belles-lettres criticism in France at a time of extreme critical barrenness'. Pierre Carboni, 'Ossian and Belles Lettres: Scottish Influences on J. B. A. Suard and late Eighteenth Century French Taste and Criticism', in, Deidre Dawson and Pierre Morère, eds., *Scotland and France in the Enlightenment* (London, 2004), p. 78. This influx of Scottish values of taste and criticism was a problem for Voltaire who feared that the growth of this import would stifle the French neoclassical tradition. In 1764 he wrote to the editor of the *Gazette Littéraire* to express his concerns: 'It is an astonishing consequence of the progress of human understanding that we now receive from Scotland several rules of taste in the various arts, from epic poetry to gardening. The capacity of human understanding increases daily, and we may soon expect to receive poetics and rhetorics from the Orkney islands. But we would rather like to see great artists in those countries than great reasoners on the arts'. Voltaire, quoted in, Carboni, 'Ossian and Belles Lettres', p. 79

ideas of the *moderns*'.¹ The dissection of the primitivist argument was carried out by Adam Ferguson in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, which located the ancestors of Scotland in the guise of the noble savage.² 'The amiable plea of humanity was little regarded by [the ancients] in operations of war. Cities were raised, or enslaved; the captive sold, mutilated, or condemned to die... If their animosities were great, their affections were proportionate: they, perhaps loved where we only pity; and were stern and inexorable, where we are not merciful, but only irresolute'.³ This assessment fitted comfortably into the Ossianic world, and characters such as Connal are almost primitive moral philosophers, allowing reason to guide them rather than their passions. Such a duality might appear to be out of place, but as Adam Potkay has noted, it can also have a unifying effect noting that Ossian is, 'an ideal reconciliation of eighteenth-century oppositions: in him, the passionate fierceness of the citizen-warrior combines with the delicate affections fostered by domesticity, pre-commercial civic-virtue joins with modern manners'.⁴ It was precisely this blending of ancient and modern which made Ossian the phenomenon that it was. It allowed for a contrast between Scots primitive advanced culture with Greek primitive debased culture. Regardless of the problems that surrounded Ossian in later years, in the mid eighteenth century it was a source of much pride for a country who for a time could boast of a literary talent equal to Homer. Tobias Smollett, writing in *Critical Review* even went as far as to say, 'We defy all antiquity to produce nobler images, or any character that equals Fingal in those excellencies which

¹ Kirsti Simonsuuri, *Homer's Original Genius: Eighteenth-century notions of the early Greek Epic 1688 – 1798* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 109

² See Neil R. Grobman, 'Adam Ferguson's Influence on Folklore Research: The Analysis of Mythology and the Oral Epic', *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38 (1974), pp. 11-12

³ Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, (Edinburgh, 1967), p. 199

⁴ Adam Potkay, 'Virtue and Manners in Macpherson's Poems of Ossian', *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 107 (1992), p. 127

constitute the hero'.¹ For Smollett therefore, the epic was better served by the writer of natural man, rather than the purely imitative style of *The Epigoniad*.

Blackwell would surely have approved of the images and themes contained within the works of Ossian, for they represented the natural images that would have adorned ancient poetry. He lamented of modern poetry that:

While the moderns... can think nothing Great or Beautiful,
But what is the Produce of Wealth, they exclude themselves
from the pleasantest and most natural images that adorned
the old poetry.²

He went on to elaborate that it was the perennial evils of wealth and luxury that were the reasons why modern poetry was lacking the insight and precision of its ancient predecessor. The same wealth and luxury which had resulted in the downfall of Rome and had led to decay in the ancient world was a real threat to British forms of liberty and virtue. This should not be taken as merely Blackwell's disgust at modern forms of literature, for he was at pains to point out that the modern poets were themselves capable of producing work that was free from servile imitation and located in the natural world. Blackwell in fact had a more positive outlook on the direction for modern literature and the poets who would produce it:

For we are not to imagine, that he [Homer] cou'd discover the
entertaining Prospects, or rare productions of a country
better than we can. *That* is a subject still remaining to us,
if we will quit our Towns, and look upon it: We find it
accordingly, nobly executed by many of the Moderns, and
the most illustrious Instance of it, within these few Years,
doing honour to the British Poetry.³

¹ Tobias Smollett, *The Critical Review*, quoted in, Howard D. Weinbrot, *Britannia's Issue*, (Cambridge, 1993), p. 542

² Blackwell, *Enquiry*, p. 24

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35

He then proceeded to reference James Thomson at the bottom of the page, and stated that he was the author of *The Seasons*. Clearly then, Blackwell perceived that the impulses of the modern poet to write about subjects free from wealth and luxury could yield works of quality, and in this case it would appear that Thomson had heeded the advice to quit the towns and to instead record the aspects of nature and his surroundings, in the same way that Homer had done centuries before.

It is easy to see why Blackwell would have approved so strongly of *The Seasons* as they represent the model which he himself has established for the production of superior poetry. However, Blackwell appeared to have more connections with Thomson than just poetry which concerned itself with nature. Both of their ideals on virtue and liberty were in perfect harmony and Blackwell lost no opportunity in alluding to his works, in particular the poem *Liberty* (1735) to bolster his own arguments about the state of modern Britain. The most explicit mentions occur in *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* (1753-1764)¹ where he frequently referred to liberty as ‘the Goddess of the fearless eye’ a phrase directly lifted from the works of Thomson. Blackwell again acknowledged the influence of the poet in this matter, but it was Blackwell’s warning from history which was most reminiscent of *Liberty*.

BRITONS BEWARE! Think what you are doing! The Man
that forgoes VIRTUE for WEALTH, that sacrifices *publick*
Spirit to *private Pleasure*, is forging Fetters for himself and
his Posterity, *Luxury* and *Immorality* arrived at a certain
Pitch, infallibly entail lawless Power and abject Slavery.
VICE is a tame, humble, crouching thing; and *VIRTUE*,
real VIRTUE, the most undaunted and exalting Principle
in the human Breast.²

¹ Blackwell wrote the first two volumes of the *Memoirs* but had left the third volume uncompleted after his death. William Duncan, of Marischal College supposedly took over its composition until his own premature death in 1760.

² Thomas Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* (3 vols., London, 1753-1764), I, p. 376

This passage reads almost like a prose version of Thomson's poem. All the key issues and themes are encapsulated within this one passage; virtue is a prominent element in the maintenance of a flourishing society, it is a simple thing to possess yet a difficult thing to hold on to for a long period of time, as the fate of the Roman empire had illustrated. Like Thomson, Blackwell approved of the Spartan system of governance and the Roman age of the consulship where power was split equally, and a system of checks and balances existed to thwart the corrosive evils which reduced the empire. And as with Thomson, he transferred this ancient system of checks and balances into the modern British political system, especially in the division of Church and State which in his view kept the dangers of vice at a considerable distance from the country, although, of course, he strenuously advised vigilance to protect British liberty.

Should one be in any doubt over Blackwell's adherence to Thomson's beliefs on liberty, and the shared view they had over the present position of Great Britain, the words of the poet in Blackwell's own text provide concrete evidence:

It was by awful Deeds
Virtues and Courage that amaze mankind,
The QUEEN OF NATIONS rose.¹

Another feature which is evident in both these writers' works, which given the nature of their subject matters would not appear to lend itself, is the role of science. All of Blackwell's literary works follow a strict Analytical and Rationalist Method, whereby he investigated, in Homer's case, his early influences and the circumstances of his life and the effects that they would have had on his writing. In the case of *Letters Concerning Mythology* he analysed the literary productions of the age in order to extrapolate how the

¹ Blackwell, *Memoirs*, I, p. 96

Gods had become allegories for morals and fables. In *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* he used the literary sources of the age to investigate the situation facing Romans at a transitional phase in their history. Blackwell also used this as an opportunity to address the growing perception that the study of belles-lettres was the preserve of the private citizen removed from practical participation in the real world. He confronted this issue at the earliest opportunity in the *Memoirs*:

It is now scarce a question among the wiser part of Mankind, whether Knowledge acquired by Books, or by Experience in Business, be the preferable Acquisition. At the same time the unprejudiced readily allow, that neither Species while separate can reach perfection, or simply rise to its full Value in Life; but each must remain lame, until converse with *Books* combine with Knowledge of Men, and, like *Art* and *Genius* in Poetry, mutually correct Faults and supply the Defects of one another.¹

Here experience and knowledge are symbiotically linked, and without both, the individual is not complete. In certain respects the combination of the two are greater than the sum of their parts for the reason that together, they raise the value of life itself.² Furthermore, the application of both can be beneficial to the individual, and by extension society, because each one can perform a correcting function on the other if one of the two lacks advancement. Therefore each provided a self-regulatory service in relation to its counterpart. Art and science were also inextricably linked in this relationship, again for the reason that the development of an individual was aided to a far greater extent by their inter-connection than by their separation. Blackwell cited Cicero as the prime example of

¹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 1

² He reiterates this point later in the second volume of the *Memoirs* 'LEARNING I insist upon it, must be connected with LIFE – must qualify its Possessor for Action; else it is just so much Lumber, serving at best as an idle Amusement, and too often the Object of deserved Ridicule'. *Ibid.*, II, p. 276

this blend of knowledge and experience, for while he was a poet for pleasure, he cultivated rhetoric as the necessary instrument of government.

Blackwell's thorough and investigative study of language was also a crucial ingredient in the *Memoirs*. In fact, he even upbraided the favourite championed by the Edinburgh history professor Charles Mackie, Terentius Varro, for his work addressed to Cicero, *Of the Appellations of Things*. Although Blackwell acknowledged the credentials of Varro, particularly the fact that through his erudite study he had become a great master in both Greek and Roman antiquity, he believed that the piece was faulty in two respects. In the first instance, Varro had made an error in hunting for the rise of Latin words, from metaphors, allusions and far-fetched figures in the *same* language, when they were, according to Blackwell, simply derived from the Aeolian and Doric dialects of their ancestors in Greek. Where he had really made his mistake was in his ignorance of the Eastern and Western tongues, which Blackwell identified as the Aramaic and Celtic languages. The Aramaic was important because it had given names to the majority of the Gods, as well as their rituals, and the Celtic language had provided the words for many things specific to war and the rustic life.¹ Blackwell appreciated the difficulty of attempting to provide such etymologies even when it was a figure of genius such as Varro who had endeavoured to create it. Blackwell even alluded to his *Letters Concerning Mythology* where he recognised the efforts of Varro, and stated that he too was following in his footsteps. The difference between them was that Blackwell did not confine himself exclusively to etymologies, and instead he rested his accounts of mythology, and the various shapes that it had assumed in the religions of different

¹ Blackwell, *Memoirs*, II, pp. 61-65

countries upon both history and human nature.¹ Blackwell's methodological approach to the *Memoirs* was also a departure from histories of the past. For in this instance he attempted to provide an intellectual history. Initially he looked at how the arts reflected the political rise and fall of Rome most notably through the works of Virgil and Horace, but he also demonstrated how those arts themselves could in turn impact upon the political development of a state. To emphasise the new literary dimension which he was incorporating over the historical investigations of the past, Kirsti Simonsuuri has identified the area in which Blackwell was primarily investing. 'The analytical framework was not historical relativism, but poetics. It was an inquiry concerning the conditions of poetic authenticity, thus constituting a central theme for the Scottish Enlightenment'.² This last statement is certainly true for the role which Blackwell himself would play, albeit unintentionally in the Ossian phenomenon, and it does illustrate that he was connecting with the later Enlightenment through his own unique investigations in the earlier period. However one must be careful in removing the historical column from the literary temple which Simonsuuri acknowledges Blackwell was constructing. It is imperative that one recognises the range of systems and doctrines that he was drawing from in order to reach his conclusions. In this regard his methods are closer to modern scientific analysis than modern literary criticism, as Simonsuuri has eloquently expressed:

¹ *Ibid.*, II p. 65. Blackwell provided an anecdote about the power of poetry and the poet in any society when he recounted the tale of a young poet by the name of Publius Maro (Virgil), who during the civil war period had the indignity of having his possessions stripped by plundering soldiers. Two poets by the name of Asinius Pollio and Cornelius Galcas alerted Julius Caesar who intervened on his behalf commanding that the soldiers should be provided for by other means. This was the power of poetry: 'True Poetry exempts the most common Events from Oblivion. Amid Multitudes who shared the same Fate VIRGIL'S Pen has alone eternized the Loss of his Manner, and bestowed Immortality on his Patrons for its Restitution. For it is the powerful Touch of the Muse that either consecrates to Fame, or condemns to Ignominy'. *Ibid.*, II, p. 234

² Kirsti Simonsuuri, 'Blackwell and the Myth of Orpheus' in, Jennifer J. Carter & Joan Pittock, eds., *Aberdeen and The Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1987), p. 199

First he formulated his problem (premises) then he stated a possible answer (hypothesis), then he displayed his evidence (discussion), and finally gave his conclusion (result).¹

His Analytical and Rationalist method was important not only because it formed the basis for literary enquiry in the works of Blair, Smith, Kames, Witherspoon and Campbell, but also because it demonstrated that Blackwell blended together methods and frameworks which modern criticism wished to separate. Consequently to understand Blackwell better as a literary critic one must rejoin the literary and the scientific spheres to analyse him in his literary and historical context. One should bear in mind however, that although Blackwell employed a scientific method in order to criticise history and literature, he still retained a veneration of the ancients, and used this method as a means to promote them, not to denigrate them. In this respect he differed from the Abbé Jean Terrasson, who wished to dismantle the unassailable reputation of Homer, and in his place enthrone his philosophical hero Descartes. Terrason, who was writing in France at the time of the ancients and moderns debate envisaged a system which would permit the moderns to excel the ancients in literary production in the same way that they had in the field of science. Terrasson's ultimate goal was to introduce, 'the same Light of Reason and true Philosophy, by Help and Assistance of which there has of late been such Great and Noble Discoveries in the Study and Knowledge of Nature, into... Eloquence and Poetry, Criticism and Philology, in a word... Belles Lettres'.² Terrasson thought that the defenders of Homer had erred because they made his virtues timeless, but as Joseph Levine has recognised, Terrasson condemned antiquity, as well as all other cultures, and

¹ Simonsuuri, *Homer's Original Genius*, p. 103

² Jean Terrasson, *A Critical Dissertation upon Homer's Iliad* trans. Francis Brerewood (2 vols., London, 1722-1725), I, p. xxxiii

as a result Homer was condemned to purgatory because Descartes had not revealed himself to him.¹ Furthermore it should serve as a warning not to dismiss Blackwell along with a plethora of other Scottish Enlightenment figures, as suffering from some sort of cultural schizophrenia, because any duality which does exist in his works is there in the service of ascertaining the truth in the most thorough and logical manner possible. Even after his death Blackwell helped to encourage the development of literary practice at Aberdeen; for his widow, Barbara Blackwell had left money in 1796 to bestow and award on 'the person who should compose and deliver, in the English language, the best discourse upon a given literary subject'.²

Like Blackwell, David Fordyce was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and in the 1730s received a licence to become a preacher in Scotland, although he subsequently did not take up a position within the church. Instead he became the professor of moral philosophy at Marischal College in 1742 and established himself as a lecturer, which proved to be short lived as he drowned off the coast of the Netherlands in 1751. Although his life was relatively short, he managed to forge a significant number of friendships with the English dissenters in the course of his travels, and none more significant than with Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) whose dissenting academy in Essex Fordyce attended for a time.³ Doddridge is a significant figure for Fordyce, because he

¹ Levine, 'Giambattista Vico', p. 71

² Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, eds., Donald J. Withrington and Ian R. Grant (Wakefield, 1982), XIV, p. 306

³ The English dissenting academies provided an education somewhat similar to what the Scottish universities began to offer in the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe was taught at a dissenting academy under the tutelage of Charles Morton. The next generation of dissenters were taught by Doddridge and Issac Watts (1674-1748). At the Warrington academy in 1758 John Aikin (1713-1780) was appointed an instructor of languages and belles-lettres. Aikin had studied under George Turnbull, and he rated his works highly. He also valued the works of Fordyce, Reid and William Duncan. The founder of Warrington, John Seddon, who taught natural philosophy had graduated from Glasgow where he studied under Francis Hutcheson. It is also noticeable that Aikin, Watts, Doddridge and Joseph Priestly, who was Warrington's

also became his patron, and a considerable correspondence exists between them.¹ In his own academy, Doddridge encouraged his students to practice English elocution by holding debates, and critiquing sermon, poems and essays by prominent English figures such as Francis Bacon.² Fordyce was greatly concerned with how both men and women ought to be educated in the modern world. To this end he produced a substantial two volume work entitled *Dialogues Concerning Education* (1745) in which five companions travel to an academy in order to learn from the professors who teach there.³ It was most likely that they were actually presented as a series of letters to begin with, but following advice from Blackwell, who advised him not to mix the two forms, he opted to keep his work in the style of a dialogue.⁴ The activities of the students at the academy also provide a window into the club life of early eighteenth century Aberdeen, a world in which Fordyce and his fellow students were very much part of the fabric.⁵ The influence of the *Dialogues* even reached the shores of the New World, and along with George

tutor in language and belles lettres from 1762-1767, and who published *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777), all possessed doctorates from Scottish universities. For more on the English dissenting academies see: Richard Terry, 'The Eighteenth Century Invention of English Literature: A Truism Revisited', *British Journal of Eighteenth Century Studies* 19 (1996), pp. 47-62

¹ J. D. Humphries, ed., *The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D. D.* (5 vols., London, 1829-31) Doddridge also kept up a correspondence with the Scottish poet Robert Blair, writer of *The Grave* (1743), who wrote to him about the problems of a member of the church entertaining literary pretensions. Blair hoped that it was, 'not unbecoming my profession as a minister of the gospel, though the greatest part of it was composed several years before I was clothed with so sacred a character'. Blair to Doddridge, 25 February [1742], in, Robert Anderson, *Works of the British Poets* (13 vols., London, 1795), VIII, p. 853. Blackwell also corresponded with Doddridge.

² For more on the links between Fordyce and Doddridge, as well as an analysis on the similarities of the Scottish universities and English dissenting academies see: Peter Jones, 'The Polite Academy and the Presbyterians, 1720-1770', in, John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch eds., *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983), pp. 156-177

³ There is good evidence that the academy of Doddridge was in fact the model for the academy in Fordyce's *Dialogues*. Fordyce sent a draft of his work to his mentor in 1743 to receive criticism. Thomas P. Miller cites the fact that the master of the academy uses the comparative method, and also mentions the fact that the ancients were so adept at public speaking because they studied current languages and not dead languages. Thomas P. Miller, *The Formation of College English* (Pittsburgh, 1997), pp. 86-116

⁴ Jones, 'The Polite Academy', p. 164

⁵ R. J. Allen, *The Clubs of Augustan England* (Connecticut, 1933), p. 166. In his extensive work on the Clubs of Scotland, D. D. McElroy failed to make any mention of Fordyce or the influence of the *Dialogues*.

Turnbull's *Observations on a Liberal Education* (1742) formed part of Benjamin Franklin's thinking when he set out his own educational programme in, *Proposals relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* (1749).¹

As an educational innovator Fordyce also influenced Franklin's fellow professor in Pennsylvania, William Smith (1727-1803). In his enthusiasm for Fordyce's pulpit oratory, he advised: 'For more on the *Eloquence* and *Action* proper for the *Pulpit*, I would recommend to you the ingenious Pieces published by the two Fordyces on that subject'.² In particular he adhered to Fordyce's principle of the proper methods for instructing and persuading an audience, for both men were concerned over engaging the principles of man's nature. Born in Scotland, Smith attended Marischal College in his youth before leaving for New York to become a private tutor. His essay, *A General Idea of the College of Mirania* (1753) found favour with Franklin who offered him the position of rector in the Philadelphia Academy which Smith accepted. This coincided with the educational reform programme that took place in Aberdeen, and these reforms had a great influence on Smith. As Dennis Barone has observed, Smith's own brand of rhetorical theory should not only be viewed as a unique example in early America, but also as a typical part of the Scottish Enlightenment.³ Smith drew extensive examples from the ancients to illustrate his course, but he also employed examples from modern poets such as, Pope, Milton, Shakespeare and Thomson. His recourse to poetry as a prism through which to view aesthetics was something which Blair would go on to exploit in his own lectures. But as

¹ Franklin admitted that he actually made the mistake of attributing Fordyce's ideas to Francis Hutcheson: Benjamin Franklin to William Smith, 3rd May 1753, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed., L. W. Labaree (38 vols., Connecticut, 1961), IV, p. 79

² William Smith, 'A Letter from Reverend Mr. Smith, Provost of the College of Philadelphia, concerning the Office and Duties of a Protestant Ministry, especially in Times of public Calamity and Danger', in, Thomas Barton, *Unanimity and Pubic Spirit* (Philadelphia, 1755), p. xx

³ Dennis Barone, 'An Introduction to William Smith and Rhetoric at the College of Philadelphia' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 134 (1990), p. 114

with his fellow emigrant Witherspoon, Smith conceived of his rhetoric as a vital engine in civic life: 'Taste for polite Letters, not only teaches us to write well, and renders Life comfortable to ourselves, but also contributes highly to the Cement of Society and the Tranquility of the State'.¹ This concept of the civic orator is manifest in Fordyce's *Dialogues*. Once he had decided upon his format, Fordyce immediately established the paradigm for the educated individual in the figure of Sophron, an acquaintance of the author before he entered the academy.

Sophron is a young Gentleman of the mildest Aspect, and a proportionable Sweetness of Manners. He has naturally a rich Vein of Fancy, and a happy Facility of Expression that will qualify him for being one of the finest Speakers in *Great Britain*. His great Talent lies in History, Poetry, and the fine Arts, to which he joins a Mastery of Classical Learning, surprising for his Age. His Memory is large and tenacious. And his Knowledge is not hoarded up by him as an useless Treasure, but he can, with admirable Dexterity, apply the Experience of ancient and modern Times to the Use of Life and Entertainment of Company; either confirming general Observations by Instances from History, or enlivening Conversation with an Account of real Characters and Manners.²

There are several things which one may observe about the education which Sophron received from the academy. The most striking was his ability to move effortlessly from the civic sphere to the world of polite conversation. Fordyce was writing at a time before belletrists such as Blair established rhetoric and belles-lettres at the heart of polite learning which focussed on the individual and his ability to function within society. For Fordyce there was no permanent division between the two, and the active civic orator which Sophron clearly was, can be both active citizen and polite scholar. This was

¹ William Smith, *A General Idea of the College of Mirania* (New York, 1753), p. 19

² David Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education* (2 vols., London, 1745), I, pp. 13-14

evident because Fordyce was insistent that the learning which took place in the academy must be practically useful, otherwise it would benefit nobody. There is also a harmonious mixture of classical and modern learning, which indicates that the best education involved a system which took the best elements of each model and blended them into a programme which would have a greater benefit, both to the individual and society as a whole. The academy's master, Euphranor, who can be viewed in some respects as an image of Doddridge, instigated a programme of teaching that included Aristotle's Dialectic and Rhetoric with elements of Lockean theory, which is reminiscent of the course which John Stevenson taught at Edinburgh when he also included his belles-lettres hour.¹ The link between Fordyce's and Stevenson's literary techniques was alluded to by John Ramsay, but he believed Fordyce to be the superior scholar. 'There is no comparison', asserted Ramsay, 'between David Fordyce and John Stevenson [in logic] at Edinburgh whose work is derivative. Fordyce's is without the smallest tinge of scepticism or singularity'.² Although Ramsay may have genuinely believed Fordyce to be the better scholar, his own appreciation was most likely tinged by a religious bias. His distaste for Stevenson's scepticism coupled with his approval of Fordyce's system, which was established on solid religious ground only served to reinforce his belief. However, both men were greatly concerned with literary matters. In fact the instruction of literary criticism appears to be one of the main educational branches of the academy, which although intends to provide individuals with a well rounded education, is content to divide itself into smaller groups for more intense study. Fordyce described these people

¹ 'A Short Account of the University of Edinburgh, the present Professors in it, and the several parts of Learning taught by them', *Scots Magazine* 3 (1741), p. 373

² John Ramsay, NLS MS 1635 Ramsay also considered Fordyce to possess a superior intellect to Blackwell.

as partaking in 'Branches of literary Commerce', adding that 'Some are Dealers in Words, weigh their Force, Significance and Beauty, and compute the Value and Propriety of the several Idioms of Language'.¹ As one would expect from an Aberdonian professor at this time, Fordyce framed the practice of criticising literature with the language of investigative science. His recourse to words such as 'weigh' and 'compute' illustrate the empirical nature of belles-lettres in the north east, a legacy which started with Blackwell and resulted in the highly scientific system of Alexander Bain in the nineteenth century.²

Although Fordyce was a strong adherent to the scientific principles of the Enlightenment, he was able to reconcile this with his religious outlook. His main theological piece, *Theodorus: A Dialogue Concerning the Art of Preaching* (1752) posthumously published by his brother James Fordyce, also a Minister, contained both a strong scientific influence as well as evidence of classical and modern learning.³ Fordyce's classical leanings did put him somewhat at odds with his fellow writers on pulpit eloquence. While both Blair and Leechman at Edinburgh and Glasgow were proponents of a Ciceronian brand of eloquence Fordyce drew most of his influence from the Athenian system of rhetoric, for he believed it contained a truer form of eloquence. According to Fordyce, although Cicero possessed a powerful rhetorical style, his speeches, 'though filled with the noblest Strains of Eloquence, are yet generally diffuse and declamatory, sometimes puerile, and often florid'.⁴ This florid style was to be avoided at all costs in the pulpit, as it was apt to take away from the overall message of

¹ Fordyce, *Dialogues*, p. 22

² For the role which natural philosophy has to play in the rhetorical system of Bain see, Shelley Aley, 'The Impact of Science on Rhetoric Through the Contributions of the University of Aberdeen's Alexander Bain', in, Lynne Lewis Gaillet, ed., *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (New Jersey, 1998), pp. 209-218

³ *Theodorus* was frequently reprinted with James Fordyce's 'Sermon on Eloquence, and an Essay on the Action of the Pulpit'.

⁴ David Fordyce, *Theodorus: A Dialogue Concerning the Art of Preaching* (London, 1752), p. 25

the preacher by adorning a simple and unvarnished truth with literary ornaments and flourishes wholly inappropriate for the preacher. This may also explain why Witherspoon was so anxious for his own students to be wary of imitating Cicero's style too slavishly. As a result of this perception Fordyce preferred the Greek model and especially the rhetoric of Demosthenes. The reason that he was the most successful of these orators was because he spoke to the purpose, used no unnecessary circumlocutions, affected no insignificant parade of eloquence, and neither employed figures except what were expressive and proper, nor used any arguments except for those that were cogent and weighty.¹ Although there was still the potential for abuse of the system by employing the turgid flourishes of language to ensnare a weak mind, the Greek system had not succumbed to avarice and luxury in the same way that the Roman system had done. Fordyce identified liberty as the soul of Roman eloquence, and when that had been lost that eloquence had only lent itself to empty oratory. Although the classical past was something which could be used to strengthen oratory, Fordyce was just as keen as Blackwell to insist that it should not come at the expense of a natural style. He identified James VI as a key figure who rekindled the vogue of learning in Britain, but as his underlings vied for his favours it encouraged a 'pompous metaphorical dress of preaching'. The problem as he saw it was the overindulgence in the classics, and as preachers began to quote more and more from Greek and Latin authors, so the text became cold and dry, and compositions began to be adorned with the 'silly jingle of words'.² As far as Fordyce was concerned, ancient learning was a useful tool for the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21

² *Ibid.*, p. 39

preacher, but overindulgence in the classical style produced a stilted and artificial eloquence, which would be of no use to anyone.

Indeed, the very literary method which Fordyce used to transmit his ideas on preaching was located in the classical world. His decision to employ the dialogue format, which had been little used in Scotland up to this point was a clear indicator of his classical training, and as such demonstrated the influence of an Aberdonian education which had a more overt classical influence than in the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The fact that the apparent incongruity of heathen methodology and Christian methods can be incorporated into Fordyce's dialogue, are representative of the system in Aberdeen which could blend classical learning with Christian piety. Despite his initial distaste for university figures indulging in heathen forms of literature, John Witherspoon actually defended the dialogue format when he became involved in the Douglas controversy with the publication, *Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (1757). While Witherspoon was resolute over the danger of plays, he felt that dialogue itself was a viable and virtuous method of transmitting religious ideals, and stipulated that those who believed there to be any form of sin in this style may as well dismiss parables, figures of speech, and the entire art of oratory, for they were to be found in real life, of which the written dialogue was merely the imitation.¹ As if anticipating Witherspoon's fears that the heathens were speaking in place of the apostles, Fordyce stated that the most noble manner for a preacher was the apostolic manner. Although the apostles themselves were simple and humble men he detected within their oratory a brevity of precept and a

¹ On the use of dialogue in writing Witherspoon believed that, 'it is very possible to write a treatise in the form of a Dialogue, in which the general rules of the Drama are observed, which shall be as holy and serious, as any sermon that ever was preached or printed. Neither is there any apparent impossibility in getting different persons to assume the different characters, and rehearse it in society'. John Witherspoon, *Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (Glasgow, 1757), p. 11

simplicity of words, as well as a pathos of address which would be worthy of imitation in every preacher. However, as he was careful to warn against simply imitating the ancients, so too did he warn against copying the apostles:

I believe the *Apostolic* Manner... is a noble Pattern for modern Preachers in many and important Respects. But to copy it too close, without making proper Allowances for the Difference of *their* Character, and that of the *Apostles*, and of the Manners of this Age and this in which we live, might perhaps lead to the forward Imitators into several Mistakes. Those *Apostolic* Instructors were informed upon the *Eastern* Taste and Manner.¹

On one hand we can see that Fordyce is keen to show how servile imitation can lead to an inferior brand of pulpit oratory and he does this by showing that the manners of the apostles were suited and adapted to a different age. In such an age a modern sensibility would not be responsive to similar stimuli and as a result the oratory would suffer. The hand of Thomas Blackwell is clear in the formulation of Fordyce's thought in this instance, for Blackwell argued, as Fordyce did, that imitation led to inferior forms of literary production.² The older professor's influence on Fordyce should not be underestimated as he was described as an uncle to the Fordyce brothers, although he was actually his cousin, and most likely had a role in securing the chair of Moral Philosophy for his charge at Marischal College.³ Having established that there were different manners in that age, Fordyce proceeded to argue that this style, appropriate for its day,

¹ Fordyce, *Theodorus*, p. 27

² Fordyce could also have had Blackwell's *Letters Concerning Mythology* in mind when writing *Theodorus*. In discussing the Eastern taste and manner of the Apostles Fordyce goes on to suggest: The *Jews*, and in general the People of those *Eastern* Countries, were naturally of a warm Imagination: their Perceptions were acute, and their Passions violent: they spoke little, and thought much; and what they spoke was generally with great Parade and many Circumlocutions: when prompted by vehement Emotions, or inspired by the sudden Sallies of an heated Fancy, they broke out into strong Metaphors, bold Figures, daring Images, and a Diction often extravagant, and always pompous. We may believe, that their Manner would be of a piece, full of Heat and Action, intense and animated far beyond the Ordinary of Countries, where the Fancy and Feelings of the Inhabitants were upon a lower Key'. *Theodorus*, p. 27. The passage is very similar to Blackwell's observations on the division of metaphor and simile with regard to how it is deployed by those living in the East: See Blackwell, *Letters*, p. 71

³ Alan Ruston, 'David Fordyce', in, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com

would appear unnatural and extravagant to a modern audience which would have had different criteria for correct manners and taste.

The poor opinion of rhetoric which modern preachers held, was due in no small part to one of the apostles themselves. Paul was frequently used as an example of how Christian preachers should view rhetoric, which he laid out in I *Corinthians* ii. I: ‘And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God’. And at ii. 4: ‘And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power’. As a result of Paul’s attack on eloquence and oratory and the desire to speak the simple truth of God, he became the icon for anti-rhetorical sentiment, and a bulwark against the florid style of false oratory. However, it is worth while bringing in David Fordyce’s brother James, who wrote *A Sermon on the Eloquence of the Pulpit* (1757) and offered a novel interpretation as to the reason for Paul’s apparent distaste for rhetoric.¹ Corinth itself held the key. At this time Fordyce claimed it was full of sophists, a petulant disputing tribe, who prided themselves in being able, by means of argument and rhetoric to overthrow the plainest truths, or to support the most apparent errors, and who corrupted youth and misled people. They had a special kind of eloquence, which introduced a general means of scepticism in opinion. The same argument for Paul

¹ James Fordyce actually attained his degree at Glasgow University from where he was offered the position of minister with a group of dissenters in London’s Monkswell Street. He was a close friend of Hugh Blair, and Blair even preached there on his visits to the capital. In fact, it was Fordyce who introduced Blair to Samuel Johnson for the first time. James Boswell, *Boswell’s London Journal* (London, 1952), p. 253. James was also greatly concerned with the morals of both young men and women. To this end he wrote *Addresses to Young Men*, and, *The Character and Conduct of the Female Sex* (1776). Fordyce shared with Beattie the problems that novels could have on the minds of young women, and that apart from the beautiful productions of Samuel Richardson, ‘there seem to me to be very few in the style of the novel, that you can read with safety, and yet answer that you can read with advantage’. James Fordyce, quoted in, John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987), p. 164

rejecting the arguments of the sophists is apparent in Leechman's 'Treatise on Rhetoric'. He stated that there were in the apostles' days, and had been in almost every age of the world, certain persons who taught vain sophistry, and studied nothing but pomp of words, and artificial eloquence, that would serve their purpose, and was suited only to their interested designs. He differentiated between opinion and real knowledge, and conceded that the ancients had done likewise in order to show the difference between sophistry and true eloquence. Therefore Paul's attack on eloquence was on those who used it in the service of sophistry.¹ Fordyce took this a stage further and argued that:

St. Paul was a Man of too much Candor, Learning, and Judgement, to depreciate any useful Talent whatever, much less a Talent which hath always been esteemed by wise Men, and employed by able Ministers, as a powerful Instrument for promoting the Cause of Religion.²

Moreover Paul himself was to be held up as a model for true eloquence: 'This great Apostle was in fact an Orator of the very first Rate himself, and made as much, perhaps more use of human Eloquence than any other Preacher that we know of'.³ Fordyce in this respect had succeeded in turning Paul from an enemy of rhetoric into one of the best models of Christian eloquence for preachers to emulate. David Fordyce accepted that an empty show of eloquence would be of no benefit to a congregation, and insisted that the best orator was the individual who regarded ornament as subservient to his ultimate ends. Therefore, the depth of his art ought to be concealed, not for any malicious reasons, but simply to show an air of simplicity on the surface which would be of greater benefit to his listeners. Again the over-riding emphasis for Fordyce was that a preacher should speak plainly and simply to have the most chance of doing good. He was similar to both

¹ Leechman, 'Rhetoric', p. 67

² James Fordyce, *A Sermon on the Eloquence of the Pulpit* (London, 1757), p. 201

³ *Ibid.*, p. 202

Leechman and Blair in his outlook, but his system was altogether more scientific than either of these preachers. For Fordyce considered that the preaching style should be measured precisely for the audience which it was intended. Style and manner ought to be varied according to the nature of the subject and the capacity of the congregation. Likewise the sermon itself should run as flawlessly as clockwork, by concealing the inner springs of the contraption with the decorations of the exterior machine.¹ This smooth style dictated the way in which the preacher ought to deliver his orations. As simplicity was the key, it was vital that the subject should be entered upon without much parade from the beginning. As the preacher found his rhythm, so the style would advance, and the strength of the argument would gather force. At all times the preacher should remember to keep one significant point in his eye to where all his points should be directed, and each point should throw a light upon the truth which the preacher wished to illustrate.²

A country's history was also a significant factor in affecting the style of a preacher. Fordyce believed that in Britain during the civil war years, religious violence had given rise to a violence of passions, which caused pulpit oratory to become highly pathetic and enthusiastic. This vicious circle inflamed the people, and in turn helped to perpetuate this style of preaching. The tone which was set only served to agitate the passions of the hearers. In contrast the revolution brought a new and enlightened style to the pulpit, and consequently brought a more truly eloquent manner. Their compositions,

¹ Fordyce, *Theodorus*, p. 14

² *Ibid.*, p. 12

now free from the taint of enthusiasm accommodated both a genuine simplicity and a beauty of nature.¹

Like Fordyce, Turnbull was a figure who contributed much to the development of moral philosophy and proposed educational reform while he was at Aberdeen. He was initially educated at Edinburgh, where he became a member of the prominent Rankenian Club. He was elected as a regent at Marischal College in 1721 where he began to instruct his students in the philosophies of Shaftesbury.² Like his counterpart at Glasgow, Francis Hutcheson, Turnbull was one of the first professors at Aberdeen who changed from delivering his lectures in Latin to delivering them in English. Unlike Hutcheson, Turnbull has been relegated to the periphery of Enlightenment Scotland despite the fact that he produced substantial works in a number of areas.³ While his intellect was a great influence at Marischal College the brevity of his teaching tenure there, added to the fact that all of his major works were not commercial successes ensured that his impact was initially localised to the north east.⁴ The first of these works is the *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1740) which built upon the course he taught at the university and stipulated that moral philosophy should employ the same empirical devices that were being used in natural philosophy. In this work one can see the influence that Hutcheson exerted in this

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45

² Turnbull was not the first at Aberdeen to instruct his students in Shaftesbury's philosophy, this honour went to David Verner who introduced it for his 1721 class. Turnbull did appear to have his finger very much on the pulse of enlightened thinking however. He published his graduation thesis in 1723 *Theses Philosophicae de Scientiae Naturalis cum Philosophia Morali Conjunctione*, which accounted for the discoveries of Newton, but he argued that moral philosophy should employ the same empirical devices that were being used in natural philosophy. In 1726 he published a second thesis *Theses Academicae de Pulcherrima Mundi*, which took account of the inductive method of moral philosophy which Hutcheson was pioneering in Dublin. For more on the influence of Shaftesbury at Marischal College see: Roger L. Emerson, *Professors, Patronage and Politics: The Aberdeen Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Aberdeen, 1992)

³ James McCosh did attempt to rescue Turnbull's reputation in the nineteenth century, see: James McCosh, *The Scottish Philosophy, Biographical, Expository, Critical, from Hutcheson to Hamilton* (London, 1875), pp. 95-106

⁴ Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book*, p. 44

field. Turnbull acknowledged his thinking in the preface stating, 'The writer from whom I have borrowed most, is Mr. Hutcheson... a teacher and writer who hath done eminent service to virtue and religion in both ways, and still continues indefatigably to do so'.¹ His second significant contribution to learning was the *Observations upon a Liberal Education* (1742) and it advocated a new method of connecting the differing branches of human knowledge, which as has previously been established, contributed to the educational reforms that were put into practice in the 1750s. His final significant work was *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740) which argued that painting itself was a form of language which had the power to convey truths about nature and morality. However, one needs to be careful when assessing Turnbull's career at Marischal for it is clear that he was largely unhappy there, and had begun to seek employment elsewhere from as early as 1723. In 1725 Turnbull and his friend, Colin Maclaurin had a great difference of opinion with the College Principal Thomas Blackwell senior.² As a result of this, Maclaurin resigned, and Turnbull went to serve as a private tutor. Although he was summoned back in 1726, he finally resigned in 1727 and returned to life as a tutor, where he instructed, among others Horace Walpole.

Turnbull shared the view with both Blackwell and Fordyce that the best way to educate an individual was to encourage both ancient and modern learning. In the case of belles-lettres he believed that Horace's poems were pieces that were truly rational and useful criticism. Therefore in the preface to *Three Dissertations* (1740) he concluded that the individual ought to master the dead languages, but not simply for the purpose of speaking them, which is useless if one learns only this. Turnbull's concern mirrored what

¹ George Turnbull, *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (2 vols., London, 1740), I, x

² Turnbull also kept up a correspondence with Charles Mackie of Edinburgh.

the instruction of Greek was like at King's and Marischal before Thomas Blackwell arrived – rudimentary teaching of the mechanics of the language without the history and philosophy of the country to reinforce the learning. Language for Turnbull was merely the gateway to the world of classical learning. 'He must be very well acquainted with Antiquity and History, with ancient Philosophy, with Mankind; and with all that true and solid Criticism which deduces all its Maxims and Rules from Human Nature and the Knowledge of the World'.¹

The Principles of Moral Philosophy follow very much along Hutchesonian lines in terms of how the composition of poetry is constructed. For Turnbull, poetry ought to have a genuine and noble end, and in order to do this it must sing out its wonderful harmonies and beauties of nature. Where Turnbull went further than the Glasgow professor, was to argue that once these things had been discovered, they had to be placed into a specific order so that they may delight the listener. This order was in accordance with God's plan in nature, that is, everything has its place and everything performs an individual function which consequently benefits the whole. Turnbull went on to unpack this empirical testing of beauty in the construction of poetry. For him the disposition of mankind is to emulate nature, which in turn added to the desire for knowledge. By copying nature, which forces mankind to pay close attention to the phenomenon which it wishes to understand, it encouraged the carrying out of experiments. This desire for knowledge could be extended to the imitative arts such as poetry, painting and statuary, which were also manifestations of mankind performing experiments of a sort in order to emulate nature.² For Turnbull the responses that a person had to a poem were proofs that

¹ George Turnbull, *Three Dissertations*, (London, 1740), p. xix

² Turnbull, *Moral Philosophy*, p. 45

an innate moral sense existed in a person. Anyone moved by a fine character in a poem for example, revealed that they had the capacity to express sentiments such as pity, love, kindness, and generosity.¹ The fact that an individual was moved at all, pointed to the fact that mankind could not observe these types of sentiments without being positively moved by them, and at the same time could not remain indifferent to them. Where Turnbull believed that these imitative arts could achieve real beauty were in instances where moral truth was interconnected with human imagination. In Turnbull's words,

It is plain from the consideration of poetry, oratory, or any of the arts which are capable of touching or moving the heart agreeably, that nature has given us the imaginative faculty on purpose to enable us to give warming as well as enlightening colours to truths; or to embellish, recommend and enforce them upon the mind. For tho' truths may be rendered evident and certain to the understanding by the understanding by reasoning about them, yet they cannot reach our heart, or bestir our passionate part but by means of the imagination.²

The crucial factor in this form of imaginative expression is that the most beautiful images placed into the minds and hearts of those who experience them, are created by a moral imagination. This type of imagination not only creates the most sublime images, but it naturally promotes a more virtuous disposition. Significantly this type of imaginative conditioning while not developed in everyone can be improved through education. In this respect the study of criticism is of real importance to Turnbull, for the critical approach to literature provides the individual with a set of rules with which to test the emulation of nature, and at the same time refine that individual's ability to appreciate these imitative arts more accurately.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121

² *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56

Turnbull also linked the development of taste to the development of memory. His focus on memory was intriguing for he placed great stock on its ability to recall truths. Taste itself was therefore a type of memory, because like its counterpart it could be improved with exercise. Turnbull asked, ‘What is taste, but the power of judging truly with quickness acquired by frequent consideration and practice: that is, confirmed into habit by repeated acts?’¹ This constant reaffirmation of standards of excellence, or brain-training in effect, held the key to ascertaining perfection. For if an individual adhered to the rules of taste it would reinforce their own skills whether they were, judging, reasoning, writing, speaking, or composing. Turnbull cited Cicero as the primary example of how to train the memory, and the subsequent benefits that it would bring. This actually places the Marischal professor outside of the prevailing concept of rhetoric in his day, for by this point Ramus had removed memory from the five tenets of rhetoric, owing to the fact that the relatively wide availability of print had rendered it obsolete. Turnbull on the other hand, still clearly had a place for memory and firmly believed that the best models to emulate in this regard were the ancients.²

The problem for Turnbull was that he did not learn the lesson that experience also taught David Hume about producing large works that were not commercially successful. Whereas Hume realised that he would have to adapt his style to accommodate his potential readership, Turnbull continued to publish large treatises. Nevertheless, he did have a powerful influence over his students for the short period when he was a regent in Marischal. When this is coupled to the fact that Marischal College adopted many of the educational reforms which he advocated in his writings; it illustrates that his ideas would

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 99

² *Ibid.*, p. 100-101

go on to affect subsequent generations of Aberdonian scholars. The same can also be said of David Fordyce and Thomas Blackwell. Fordyce, like Turnbull demonstrated talents in a number of different disciplines, and his efforts to bring a literary critical appreciation to his teaching methods offered a new method of instruction at Marischal even before the reforms of the 1750s took hold. Fordyce's network of influence was impressive. He provided a model for some of the American colleges that wished to establish their own systems, and these same colleges also appreciated his literary abilities which translated not only into the written word, but as a blueprint for appropriate pulpit eloquence as well. Equally he had ties with the English dissenting academies and this created a network which allowed both the Scots and their English counterparts to exchange ideas on the latest critical developments in the growing field of belletristic criticism. Although Fordyce was not averse to this type of education, he was careful to instil in his students a civic worth with regard to eloquence of the pulpit that would render them fit for public service. Blackwell, a figure now almost relegated to the periphery of the Scottish Enlightenment was one of the first members of the Scottish literati to prove himself in a literary medium and earn commercial success with his work on Homer. Moreover, he possessed a remarkable ability to traverse territory that would eventually come to be separated into disciplines such as science, history, language and literary criticism, which he demonstrated through the sheer number of techniques and methods which he applied in order to reach the truth. His decision to eradicate supernatural beliefs as an acceptable explanation for Homer's genius and to make language, manners, religion, rhythm and history the foundation on which to establish his position, marked a turning point in the future criticism of the role of Homer in classical antiquity. Blackwell not only provided a

revolutionary method for ancient criticism, but in doing so he set out the basis for the emerging discipline of eighteenth-century literary criticism. In this respect Blackwell is aligned with the most successful of the Enlightenment writers, who all had a healthy understanding of the classics without allowing it to dominate their literary productions. Crucially he employed modern scientific methods to investigate his problems more thoroughly and this legacy can be seen in the works of subsequent authors. This application of scientific methodology to his literary production was a hallmark which was shared by both Fordyce and Turnbull, and was in general one of the key ingredients which added a different flavour to the Aberdonian enlightenment. Blackwell also had a keen awareness of what impact his investigations would have on the current state of British society, and he frequently alluded to the lessons of history, expressed in the literature of ancient times, which provided adequate warning for the maintenance of liberty and virtue. Blackwell has suffered the indignity of being misinterpreted and pigeonholed because the titles of his works can be identified as having classical concerns. However, as has been demonstrated he is a figure who needs to be analysed through the methods which he himself employed, and not through narrow modern critical methods in order to restore him to the canon of Scottish Enlightenment literature.

CHAPTER 2: AESTHETICS AND RHETORIC AT GLASGOW

Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi

Horace

Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) employed these words of Horace: if you would have me weep, you must first show that you yourself are afflicted, when he investigated the effects of laughter upon man. His friend and fellow lecturer at Glasgow, William Leechman (1706-1785), also used the motto in his examinations into the ability of a preacher to perform his duty to an audience. Although this use of the classical motto is in perfect harmony with the values of the enlightenment on a national and international level, it is illustrative of a change in the sphere of learning at Glasgow. Both Hutcheson and Leechman were representative of an enlightened metamorphosis at Glasgow, which established learning and erudition in the republic of letters at the forefront of the university system. Alexander Carlyle, who spent a year at Glasgow in the mid 1740s even identified them as the two figures who had done the most to invigorate the University. For he stated: 'It was no doubt, owing to him [Leechman], and his friend and colleague Mr Hutcheson, Professor of Moral Philosophy, that a better taste and greater liberality of sentiment were introduced among the clergy in the western provinces of Scotland'.¹ Hutcheson has often been burdened with the title of the 'father of the Scottish Enlightenment'.² Despite this imposing label however, Peter Kivy asserts that, 'Hutcheson was not a giant; but giants stood on his shoulders – and only a big man could

¹ Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Reverend Alexander Carlyle Minister of Inveresk* (Edinburgh, 1861), p. 68

² The title was first bestowed on him by his biographer, W. R. Scott. William Robert Scott, *Francis Hutcheson: His Life, Teaching and Position in the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1900)

have borne their weight'.¹ His efforts at Glasgow paved the way for the likes of Adam Smith, and provided a basis for the philosophies of enlightenment giants such as David Hume and Immanuel Kant. In his *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) he became the first person in Britain to write a sustained account of the role of aesthetics in society.² These initial investigations formed the basis of his works on moral philosophy which would become a staple of university teaching in Scotland until well into the nineteenth-century.

However, a far less investigated aspect of Hutcheson's writings is the extent to which he set in motion the emerging discipline of literary criticism. Writers such as Peter Kivy have carried out extensive work on the role which aesthetics played in the construction of his ideas on moral philosophy,³ but as his contemporaries were aware, literature was never far from the mind of Hutcheson. In his preface to Hutcheson's *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) Leechman informed his readers that,

He read the historians, poets, and orators of antiquity with a kind of enthusiasm, and at the same time with a critical exactness. He had read the poets especially so often, that he retained large passages of them in his memory, which he frequently and elegantly applied to the subjects he had occasion to treat in the course of his prelections.⁴

In light of this, Hutcheson's contribution to literary criticism and polite learning needs to be reappraised in order to restore him to the canon of Scottish literary critics. Equally, the author of the preface, William Leechman, a seriously neglected enlightenment figure who

¹ Peter Kivy, *Francis Hutcheson: An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (Den Haag, 1973), p. 35

² For the assessment that Hutcheson was the first man in Britain to systematically discuss aesthetics see, Ian Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1995), p.50

³ See: Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics* (Oxford, 2003)

⁴ William Leechman, 'Preface Giving some Account of the Life, Writings, and Character of the Author', in, Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (London, 1755), pp. 20-21

produced works on pulpit eloquence and an unpublished work on rhetoric, 'A Treatise on Rhetoric' (1763) needs to be investigated in order to illustrate the contribution that Glasgow made to the Scottish invention of English literature. There was of course a more vibrant literary culture developing in Glasgow at a general level, therefore an analysis of literary activity within the city is also necessary. Again, the role of the University is of great importance to this development, for it provided opportunities for the printers Robert and Andrew Foulis, both of whom took an interest in the belles-lettres, and this is reflected in the type of literary works which they published in the period. Furthermore, other staff members at the university of Glasgow such as Robert Simson, the professor of Mathematics, and James Moor the professor of Greek helped to create an engaging club scene in Glasgow which reached beyond the ivory tower and into the emerging industrial society of the city frequented by the merchants and the tobacco barons growing rich on the profits of the Union, but who also wished to enrich their minds with literary discussion and polite learning.¹

Before this sedate environment was fostered however, it is necessary to investigate the intellectual milieu of Glasgow University into which the vanguard of this enlightened future entered. Although Hutcheson and Leechman taught within a relatively liberal and un-bigoted system, this was not always the case. Indeed, in Hutcheson's early student days the established church had claimed that the university should be an appendage of the Presbytery, and that the teaching staff themselves should be recruited from ministers in the west of Scotland. Crucially, the orthodoxy of the university should

¹ Robert Simson was the professor of Mathematics at the University, but he did have literary leanings, and was an active participant in clubs. He also taught both Colin Maclaurin and Matthew Stewart in a private class. Both of these men would go on to hold the Edinburgh Chair of Mathematics. J. D. Mackie, *The University of Glasgow, 1451-1951* (Glasgow, 1954), p. 216

be under the control of the General Assembly.¹ In the early 1720s this conservatism had succeeded in the suspension of John Simson, the Professor of Theology, and Hutcheson's tutor when he returned to the University in 1713. Simson's 'crime' was to promulgate ideas not in keeping with the Westminster Confession of Faith, and although he was not sacked from his position he was removed from teaching, at least in the eyes of his critics, potentially heretical doctrines. The spectre of heresy haunted both Hutcheson and Leechman during their period at Glasgow. Even in Ireland when he stood in for his minister father, did Hutcheson suffer at the hands of the hard-line Scotch Presbyterianism. A disgruntled parishioner remarked to his father:

Your silly loon, Frank, had fashed a' the congregation wi' his idle cackle; for he has been babbling this oor about a gude and benevolent God, and that the sauls o' the heathens themsels will gang to Heeven, if they follow the licht o' their ain consciences. Not a word does the daft boy ken, speer, nor say about the gude auld comfortable doctrines o' election, reprobation, original sin and faith. Hoot man, awa' wi' sic a fellow.²

William Scott even goes as far as to say that the vernacular criticism of Hutcheson is a verbal reconstruction of the heresies of Simson.³ While this may be stretching credulity, it does illustrate that at this period in Hutcheson's life he was still a close adherent of Simson's own theological considerations, and that more importantly, he was convinced that God was an entity of benevolence even before he advanced benevolence as a philosophical principle.

In Leechman's case, after a bitter contest for the position of the Chair of Divinity in 1743 he subsequently had to defend himself against charges of heresy. The Presbytery

¹ Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 57

² *Ibid.*, p. 20-1

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21

seized upon his Sermon entitled, *The Nature, Reasonableness, and Advantages of Prayer* (1743) and claimed it was a heretical work.¹ David Hume rakishly remarked that he considered this sermon, 'a very good one; tho' I am sorry to find the Author to be a rank Atheist'.² The sermon was no laughing matter for the Presbytery however, and they referred the matter to the synod in order to determine whether it contained heretical notions. While the implications were serious they ultimately found,

Professor Leechman's answers to the remarks or objections made by the committee of the Presbytery of Glasgow, to be fully satisfying, and sufficient to remove any offence conceived; and found no reason to charge the said Professor with any unsoundness in the faith, expressed in the passages of the sermon complained of.³

Indeed the synod which was set up contained more tolerant members of the church, and so it was no surprise that Leechman was acquitted of heresy. In this respect one can see the emergence of a more moderate form of religious tolerance, which continued this trend in the General Assembly under the guidance of William Robertson in dropping the heresy charges against Hume and Lord Kames in the 1750s.⁴

¹ He was voted into the position by the rector George Boyle after a tied vote. However his position was undermined on the grounds that the Presbytery of Glasgow refused to accept this published sermon.

² David Hume to William Mure, in, R. Klibansky and Ernest C. Mossner, eds., *New Letters of David Hume* (London, 1954), p. 11

³ James Wodrow, 'Account of the Authors Life and of his Lectures', prefixed to, William Leechman, *Sermons*, (2 vols., London, 1789), I, p. 26

⁴ Those who brought the charges against Leechman argued that the moderates themselves were not as moderate as they would have the public believe. They argued that, 'There were Scandalous Libels and Advertisements spread against some of them; there were incendiary anonymous Letters written to others, threatening, that, in case the Committee, or Presbytery, should find any Thing culpable in the Sermon, they would make Reprisals, and publish Slandorous Falsehoods (they condescended on, or insinuate) at London, against several they particularly named, in the University and Presbytery'. James Robe, *The Remarks of the Committee of the Presbytery of Glasgow, upon Mr. Leechman's Sermon on Prayer, with His Replies Thereunto* (Edinburgh, 1744), pp. 9-10. John Willison who wrote one of the first essays attacking the moderates also attacked the sermon as unfitting of a Christian preacher. 'For when he proposes to teach his Christian Hearers and Readers the Nature of Prayer, he presents God as the Object of it merely as our Creator, without any Relation to Jesus Christ the only Mediator betwixt God and Man: He never speaks of God as upon a Throne of Grace, nor of the Merit, Satisfaction, or Intercession of Christ, thro' which Prayer can only be offered acceptably to God, more than the old Heathens'. John Willison, *A Fair and Impartial Testimony, essayed in Name of a number of Ministers, Elders, and Christian People of the Church of*

In the early part of the eighteenth-century literary and artistic expression were likewise frowned upon by an over zealous Presbytery. A 1720 production of *Tamerlane* by Nicholas Rowe had to be held off campus owing to the fact that the Church of Scotland opposed drama on religious grounds.¹ The University of Glasgow even issued a proclamation from the senate banning plays because they took students away from the contemplation of ‘more serious and usefull studies to the engadging in companies and ways of spending their time and money neither suitable nor profitable’.² This extreme Calvinism led to a view that most art forms, as well as an interest in beauty, were depraved. It was to a large extent against these attacks that those who thought artistic activities worthwhile had to defend themselves. At the time two players, a Mr. Griffin, and a Mr. James Arbuckle, a man who would go on to have a significant relationship with Hutcheson, added a controversial preface and conclusion which they read out to the university staff:

A GLASGOW stage! Where now the tragic muse
Among the fair her residence does chuse
Your generous candour spar’d their first essay
When public censure join’d to damn the play
When furious DONS exclaimed against the sin
And LUCKIES thus complained with pious grin
*There’s something worse than Popery come in.*³

Scotland (Glasgow, 1744), p. 126. There was support from those who wished to see a more enlightened brand of theology. In his closing address as moderator of the 1744 assembly, John Adams of Falkirk asserted: ‘In that case of more than usual delicacy... have we not seen the beauty of Christian charity, in condescension on the one hand to remove offence, and readiness on the other to embrace satisfaction. We have had the most agreeable evidence too of impartial regards to the merit of questions debated before us, in the honest declarations of many, that after hearing a case fairly stated, they came to judge of it in a quite different manner from what they had done upon some imperfect representations before the meeting.

Morren, *Annals of the General Assembly*, I, p. 308

¹ In the play, *Tamerlane*, personifying the virtues of a just monarch, confronts the evil tyrant Bajazet. The play focuses on the aftermath of the confrontation, contrasting the justice and mercy of *Tamerlane* to the death and retribution of Bajazet. In effect *Tamerlane*’s vision of monarchy was in tune with the ideals of the Glorious Revolution.

² *Munimenta alme Universitatis Glasguensis* Maitland Club (3 vols., Glasgow, 1854), II, p. 422

³ James Arbuckle, ‘Preface to *Tamerlane*’, quoted in, Michael Brown, *Francis Hutcheson in Dublin: The Crucible of his Thought* (Dublin, 2002), p. 101

By the time that these events had taken place, Hutcheson had left the university, and Arbuckle was in the process of completing his M. A. However, the new breed of lecturers such as John Simson, Alexander Dunlop (Greek) and John Johnston (Medicine)¹ were beginning to change the form of learning at Glasgow. Arbuckle himself acknowledged as much in his 1721 work, *Glotta: A Poem*, that Glasgow had:

Transplanted hither, th' Arts of *Greece* and *Rome*,
Here in long Mazes of abstracted Thought
Thy Footsteps, Truth, the learned Tribe have sought.
Our virtuous Youth the generous Chase pursue,
Improving Ancient Arts, or searching new:
Not idly resting in the show of Things,
But tracing nature to her hidden Springs. (ll. 189-195)

The promotion of the ancients was something which both Hutcheson and Leechman would be adept at in subsequent years, while at the same time they were aware of the importance of searching out the new disciplines which would make the ancients suitable for modern consumption.

Arbuckle is a figure worth investigating further owing to his relationship with Hutcheson. He had already gained something of a literary reputation by the time he arrived in Dublin, where he began to move in the circle of Hutcheson, and Robert Molesworth. He was the driving force and editor behind the *Dublin Journal* from 1725 to 1727, which provided a literary platform for the writers of Molesworth's adherents. The *Journal* was not a literary vehicle in the same way that the *Spectator* was, for it contained a great many philosophical essays. Nevertheless, Arbuckle contributed several critical pieces which foreshadowed thinking that would become more widely popularised by the

¹ Johnston was supposedly the prototype for Crab in Tobias Smollett's *Roderick Random* (1748) 'Owing to his opinions, his fund of wit and humour and even of profanity peculiar to himself, he was looked upon as a kind of heathen by the citizens'. John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. William Allardyce, (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1888), I, p. 277

Scots literati in the second half of the eighteenth century. Arbuckle in effect predated Adam Smith in the connection between the terms ‘sympathy’ and ‘imagination’ in eighteenth-century criticism, for he specifically referred to the imagination as an indispensable component, which was divinely implanted for the precise function of exhibiting sympathetic knowledge in others.¹ Following in the footsteps of Smith however, James Beattie would go on to elaborate upon the role of sympathy with regard to literary criticism when he stated, ‘the philosophy of Sympathy ought also to form a part of the science of Criticism’.² Arbuckle also demonstrated an appreciation of the primitive qualities of the ancients which foreshadowed the Ossianic poetry that gripped Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Arbuckle believed that the virtues which flowered in Greek and Roman poetry were rooted in acts of heroism and love. He conjectured that this growth of the poetic art founded in noble sentiment was something which was also true for the ancestors of those living in Britain:

The rude Poetry of our Ancestors was also of the same kind. Every great Action was celebrated in Verse; and there are yet extant large Chronicles in Metre, comprehending the History of many Ages. The Rhymes, and Language, are indeed very barbarous, yet there often-times shines thro’ that Barbarity, a great Nobleness of Thought, joined with Sentiments very pure and virtuous.³

This type of criticism was later used by Hugh Blair in his *Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, Son of Fingal* (1763) to explain why a primitive bard could produce literature of such sublimity that it would be capable of touching the hearts of a modern readership. Arbuckle not only alluded to ancient poetry, but he also went on to include ballads as a

¹ James Arbuckle, *Hibernicus’s Letters* (2 vols., Dublin, 1722), I, pp. 33-34

² James Beattie, ‘Of Sympathy’, in, *Essays on Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind* (Edinburgh, 1778), p. 194

³ Arbuckle, *Hibernicus’s Letters*, I, p. 18

species of this style of poetry, which although written in more primitive times, still had the ability to move the heart.

When Hutcheson returned to the university in 1730 to take up his chair in Moral Philosophy significant changes had occurred with regard to the way in which the university operated, as well as in the method of teaching the students. These changes had been instigated in 1727 when a Royal Commission of Visitation came to the University after students and professors reported the Principal John Stirling for refusing the students the right to take part in the rectorial elections.¹ The commission abolished the regenting system which had hitherto been used at Glasgow, and instead created individual professorships. Glasgow was following in the footsteps of Edinburgh in this instance, for they had led the way when they abolished regenting in 1708. At Marischal College Thomas Blackwell was no supporter of this system either, and he attempted to instigate liberal reforms to the education system in the 1750s which resulted in Alexander Gerard's plan for education at Aberdeen. Like Hutcheson he faced religious opposition from local ministers who were intent on keeping the university as training centres for the clergy, rather than as forums for a liberal education. At Glasgow, where these reforms had already taken place, they reshaped the curriculum, and philosophy was one of the main benefactors. Whereas before regents instructed their students over a wide range of philosophical inquiries, now there were professorships in logic and metaphysics, moral philosophy and natural philosophy. The first chair of moral philosophy was Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729), Hutcheson's regent from his student days. Carmichael had been instrumental in promoting the ideas of Grotius and Pufendorff at the University, and he

¹ For the problems of the rectorial elections in Glasgow and the findings of the 1727 commission see: James Coutts, *History of the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1909), pp. 197-208

had a considerable impact on Hutcheson himself, however, his short tenure in the chair provided an opportunity for his former student to establish himself in the role. Initially he had to fight off his son, Frederick Carmichael for the post, as well as the principal and half the faculty members. Nevertheless he was staunchly supported by Alexander Dunlop, the professor of Greek, and his application proved successful. As he was also a former student of John Simson, there was a great suspicion over Hutcheson's theological principles, and just as Leechman would in the 1740s, so Hutcheson became embroiled in a religious controversy. Robert Wodrow, although concerned, was initially prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt: 'how the principles he goes on agree with the truths generally received in this Church, and what influence his teaching them here may have, time will discover'.¹ For the majority of the 1730s Hutcheson faced accusations that he encouraged doctrines contrary to religion and morality. However, in 1738 an anonymous pamphlet was circulated, which accused him of teaching dangerous errors with regard to religion. The specific grievance was that Hutcheson believed in the existence of moral goodness prior to the knowledge of the will or law of God. In retaliation, some of his students, including Robert and Andrew Foulis, signed a pamphlet, *A Vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the calumnious aspersions of a late pamphlet* (1738) which sought to absolve Hutcheson of any religious impropriety.² Although he was ultimately successful in escaping any serious charges of religious unorthodoxy, hard line Presbyterians viewed Hutcheson's philosophy and teaching methods as dangerously radical and revolutionary.

¹ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or, Materials for a history of remarkable providences, mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians*, ed., M. Leishman, Maitland Club 60 (4 vols., 1842-1843), IV, p. 99

² The pamphlet argued that it was correct that mankind had a notion of benevolence independent of God's will, because if there was no notion of goodness independent of that will then there would be no more to say in praise of God than that his will is consistent with itself. *A Vindication of Mr. Hutcheson from the calumnious aspersions of a late pamphlet* (Glasgow, 1738), pp. 7-8

Hutcheson in particular was revolutionary in the delivery of his lectures. He was among the first in Scotland, along with George Turnbull at Aberdeen, to lecture in English to his audience, moving away from the more conventional system of lecturing in Latin. Although he appeared to prefer lecturing in English, Hutcheson's Latin was still impeccable. His student James Wodrow recounted to the earl of Buchan that, 'he wrote and spoke, at least we thought so, better in Latin than English'.¹ There was however a precedent set before Hutcheson. A second James Wodrow, who was the professor of Divinity at Glasgow from 1672 until 1705, as well as the father of Robert Wodrow, used both English and Latin in his lectures.² Equally Andrew Ross, who was the professor of humanity from 1706 to 1735 taught Latin through the medium of the vernacular.³ There was an even earlier instance of English instruction at Glasgow in the seventeenth century which took place in the class of Gilbert Burnet who was an Episcopalian professor of Divinity at the university from 1669 to 1674. It occurred when he gave a critical commentary on the books of the Bible, and it was very much an innovation because until this juncture vernacular had been forbidden.⁴ It appeared that at any rate the students at

¹ James Wodrow to the earl of Buchan, 28th May 1808, Glasgow, Mitchell Library Baillie MS 32225

² This may have been of necessity rather than innovation however, as Robert Wodrow recalled that his father had to adapt because some of his students did not have Latin at a sufficient level sufficient to comprehend his lessons. Robert Wodrow, *Life of James Wodrow, A. M.* (Glasgow, 1828), pp. 122-127. James Melville a student at Glasgow in this period adds credence to Wodrow's claim over the lack of Latin. 'Nather being weill grounded in grammar, nor com to the yeirs of naturall judgement or understanding, I was cast in sic a grieff and despear, becaus I understood nocht the regent's language that I did nothing bot bursted and grat at his lessons.' James Melville, quoted in, Francoise Waquet, *Latin: The Empire of a Sign*, trans. John Howe (London, 2001), p. 159

³ M. L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 143

⁴ H. M. B. Reid, *The Divinity Professors of the University of Glasgow 1640-1903* (Glasgow, 1923), pp. 157-158. He also appears to have introduced some form of comparative biblical criticism in the university, for example, he took a Psalm in Hebrew and proceeded to compare it to the Septuagint, the Vulgate and the Authorised versions of the bible. Furthermore he provided his charges with an opportunity to preach a short sermon on a chosen topic for which he would respond with critical comments and advice. Burnet is an interesting figure both in terms of the influences on him, and for his influences on others. He was educated at Marischal College, but visited the English Universities where among others he made acquaintance with Ralph Cudworth at Oxford. He made a similar visit to the Netherlands, where he went to Amsterdam and

Glasgow had themselves, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, started to move away from observing the rule that Latin only should be used in conversation.¹ As far as Hutcheson was concerned, Francoise Waquet reminds us that he, ‘launched the course he was giving in English with an inaugural lecture in Latin; similarly the first holder of the chair in natural history at Pavia, Lazzaro Spallanzani, began his course, delivered in Italian, with a Latin Prolusio’.² While this demonstrates that the inaugural lecture was still formally delivered in Latin, the vernacular was beginning to form the basis of the day to day teaching in the university. Furthermore, the fact that similar vernacular revivals were taking place on the continent illustrate that the actions of Francis Hutcheson were more in keeping with European movements than in following a British ideology such as at Oxford and Cambridge, which still continued to deliver lectures in Latin. In this respect the professoriate in Scotland were adapting to continental trends rather than following a reductive system of imitating their dominant union partner.³

Leyden. He was also, for a small period from 1665-1669, the tutor of the future politician Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun.

¹ Coutts, *History of Glasgow*, p. 149

² Waquet, *Latin*, p. 26

³ Indeed, for the role of the Scotticism which would plague the later generation of literati, Waquet has some interesting observations. It would seem that both the English and Scottish pronunciation of Latin, at that time, still the dominant imperial language was something which the Europeans found cause to complain about. Samuel Sorbere complained after a visit to England that ‘they elucidate in Latin with a certain accent and pronunciation that render it as difficult to understand as their own language.’ Waquet states that, ‘in Scotland and northern England there prevailed a Latin pronunciation that John Caius called ‘Borealism’ or ‘Scotticism’’. Significantly the critics in Europe do not differentiate between the Scots and the English, and quite deliberately link them together. Waquet also draws attention to Archibald Pitcairne who famously taught medicine at Leyden university. ‘Similarly one wonders what students at Leyden University towards the end of the century would have learned from Archibald Pitcairne, a Scottish professor of medicine, whose accent when he spoke Latin made him virtually impossible to understand’. To reinforce his claim, Waquet draws testimony from the correspondences of students who studied at Leyden during Pitcairne’s time there. Waquet, *Latin*, pp. 161-2. Ultimately these examples illustrate that it was not only the Scots who were accused of speaking a dominant language incorrectly. The English themselves were guilty, in the eyes of their European counterparts, of mangling a learned language. Therefore in analyzing the relationship between the Scots and the English with regard to language, it would be prudent to widen the scope to a European level to illustrate the opinions of language on a larger scale, rather than through the narrow focus of the English attitudes to the Scots’ attempts to use their language.

While Hutcheson was the first, Leechman was not far behind in adopting his friend's style of lecturing. James Wodrow remarked that, 'though his great modesty prevented him from ever attaining to the easy and spirited manner of that celebrated Professor, [Hutcheson] who lectured, to appearance, *extempore*, walked up and down in his classroom, and spoke with an animation of countenance, voice and gesture, which instantly went to the heart... yet his Lectures were also judicious, liberal, sometimes uncommonly striking, and equally relished by the great multitude of students who attended them'.¹ It is worth noting that Leechman in his 'Treatise on Rhetoric' was at pains to warn the reader that one should never attempt to win over the audience with an empty artistic show. An animated spirit was a potential asset, but only if it was used in the service of truth, and was not accompanied with any embellishments. Introductions and styles should ultimately remain simple and direct, as simplicity and honesty were the easiest and surest ways to the audience's heart. Leechman was, of course, an admirer of Hutcheson's brand of rhetoric simply because he was a walking example of the qualities that Leechman bestowed upon a public speaker.

He had a great fund of natural eloquence and a persuasive manner: he attended indeed much more to sense than expression, and yet his expression was good: he was a master of that precision and accuracy of language which is necessary in philosophical enquiries. But he did not look upon it as his duty, either in his prelections, or in his writings upon moral and religious subjects, to keep up strictly at all times to the character of the didactive teacher, by confining himself to all the precision requisite in accurate explication and strict arguments.²

Hutcheson used a highly rhetorical style in his appeal to the imagination because he felt that this was the best way to move the will to action. Indeed this concept of the

¹ Wodrow, 'Account of the Authors Life', I, p. 28

² Leechman, 'Preface', p. 31

persuasive process of rhetoric could be traced back to the time of Francis Bacon.¹ Despite demonstrating a gift for rhetoric, Hutcheson was remarkably silent on the practical application of it in everyday society. Even in his *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755) he devoted only a fraction of his investigation to speech itself, and when he did he was mostly concerned with the obligations which one was under when engaging in polite conversation.² It is significant that Leechman focussed on the ‘precision and accuracy of language which was necessary in philosophical enquiries’, as that language was English. Although Hutcheson possessed an eloquent lecturing style, Hugh Blair criticised his literary composition in the first edition of *The Edinburgh Review* (1755). Blair tempered his observations in accordance with the circumstances under which the book was published, but still believed that his style lacked a certain smoothness. ‘As to the stile and manner; no systems can be expected to be very entertaining, and allowances are always due to a posthumous work, which may be supposed not to have received the author’s last hand. Elegance has not been studied in the composition; but the stile, tho’ careless and neglected, cannot justly be taxed as either mean or obscure’.³ Blair did acknowledge Hutcheson’s crucial influence in the growing demonstration of a taste for literature in the university, as well as the rehabilitation of the study of ancient literature, in particular the Greek language which had been neglected in the Scottish curriculum.⁴ As the first person in Britain to provide a comprehensive account of aesthetics, Hutcheson, who was certainly more than competent in the classical languages, should perhaps have attempted

¹ Thomas P. Miller, ‘Francis Hutcheson and the Civic Humanist Tradition’, in, Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher, eds., *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (East Linton, 1997), pp. 40-55; Vincent M. Bevilacqua ‘Baconian Influences in the Development of Scottish Rhetorical Theory’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 11 (1967), pp. 212-218

² Francis Hutcheson, *A System of Moral Philosophy* (2 vols., London, 1755), pp. 28-43

³ Hugh Blair, ‘A system of Moral Philosophy in three Books; written by the late Francis Hutcheson L. L. D.’, *Edinburgh Review* (1755), p. 23

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11

to gain an international audience by writing in the dominant scholarly language.

However, his recourse to English demonstrated that for the purposes of philosophical enquiry it was perfectly adequate as a medium for investigating and ascertaining philosophical truths.

The *Inquiry* did have a European predecessor. Jean-Pierre Crousaz's *Traité du Beau* (1714) was the first work on aesthetics in the French language. Like Hutcheson's work, one of the main tenets of beauty was that it could be described as uniformity in variety. As a result of this, the contemporary French critic Jean Le Clerc accused Hutcheson of plagiarizing parts of Crousaz's work in order to construct the basis for his own.¹ However, Crousaz held the opinion that appreciating beauty was a real idea, and therefore was separate from being a mere feeling or a sense perception. Hutcheson on the other hand was insistent that there was such a thing as the aesthetic sense, an innate quality which allowed people to perceive of beauty independently of education and instruction.²

In this respect he broke from the teachings of one of his greatest influences: Anthony Ashley Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Shaftesbury, in line with the European ideas on beauty felt that critical and aesthetic judgement still functioned through knowledge and not sense perception. Although both were constructing models

¹ The fact that Le Clerc identified Hutcheson as copying from a fellow French author demonstrates that the Glasgow professor was attentive to European ideas. In this regard he engages with the wider European Enlightenment to a greater degree than which Jonathan Israel affords him. While he is correct to state that most of his influences came from British thinkers in the form of John Locke, Bernard Mandeville, Hobbes and Shaftesbury, he flatly concludes that Hutcheson avoided continental influences and debates. Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670 – 1752* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 58-59

² Hutcheson was aware of Le Clerc's accusation, and he earned a lengthy rebuke from the Glasgow professor who rejected any suggestion that he had committed plagiarism. James Moore, 'The Two Systems of Francis Hutcheson: On the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment', in, M. A. Stewart, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 37-60

for the moral sense, their embryonic investigations into aesthetics would lead each man along different paths. It would be imprudent to make too great a claim for Hutcheson's system of aesthetics and his observations on beauty in the emerging discipline of literary criticism. Unlike his pupil Adam Smith, and the Edinburgh preacher Hugh Blair, Hutcheson made no claim to produce a work on rhetoric or belles-lettres. Nevertheless he influenced Smith's belletristic position through his writings on aesthetics, since he believed that rhetoric shared its origins in human nature with morals and aesthetics. As Hutcheson had identified a moral sense of beauty in both actions and affections, so Smith extrapolated that the moral-aesthetic precept of propriety could be used as a standard of judgement in both behaviour, or ethics, and verbal expression, or rhetoric.¹ However, Hutcheson was well aware of the power of literature and he did make several references to the ancient authors and the means by which they represented beauty in their works. Equally, through his investigations into the moral sense he was able to provide astute observations on the rules for authors in constructing realistic characters and plots. However it was Shaftesbury who had initially begun to address the role of literary criticism in moral philosophy. In, *Soliloquy: or, Advice to an Author* (1710) he tentatively extended his theory of the moral sense to criticism. For this purpose he used the term 'critic's eye'. The eye's gaze for Shaftesbury, was far from all seeing, and its focus was ultimately myopic. It was there to recognize moral beauty, which was where, according to him, the excellence of the author lay. The fittest subjects for the author were the beautiful actions and sentiments of men; and a beautiful action or sentiment, was just another name for a moral one. He concluded:

¹ Vincent M. Bevilacqua, 'Adam Smith and Some Philosophical Origins of Eighteenth-Century Rhetorical Theory', *Modern Language Review* 63 (1968), pp. 566-567

[T]here can be no kind of Writing which relates to Men and Manners, where it is not necessary for the Author to understand *Poetical* and *Moral* TRUTH, the *Beauty* of Sentiments, the *Sublime* of Characters; and carry in his Eye, the Model or Exemplar of that *natural Grace*, which gives to every Action its attractive Charm. If he had naturally no Eye, or Ear, for these *interior Numbers*; 'tis not likely he shou'd be able to judge better of that *exterior Proportion* and *Symmetry* of Composition which constitutes a *legitimate Piece*.¹

If there was a critical sense in the *Soliloquy* it was that of the moral sense applied to literature, whereby the critical sense was interchangeable with the moral sense. In this respect the *Soliloquy* confined literary criticism to a very narrow sphere which could only be used to promote the moral sense, rather than as an independently functioning discipline which could be used as a framework for investigating complex issues and ascertaining the truths of humanity, which later protagonists demonstrated that it was capable of doing.

Hutcheson, on the other hand, was keen to demonstrate that the understanding of beauty could be applied to literary productions in order to produce better quality works of literature instead of merely being the means to a moral end. From the outset he argued that there were two forms which beauty could take: Absolute beauty, and Relative beauty. Absolute beauty meant 'only that beauty which we perceive in objects without comparison to anything external, of which the object is supposed an imitation or picture, such as that beauty perceived from the works of nature, artificial forms, [figures]' (theorems in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions)² Under this type of beauty he admitted visible and aural forms, man-made or natural, animate or inanimate; and intelligible forms as embodied in the constructs of scientific theories. These were permitted because

¹ Lord Shaftesbury, *Soliloquy: or, Advice to an Author* (London, 1710), p. 19

² Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design* (Den Haag, 1973), p. 41

mathematics and natural sciences also offered the unity amidst variety that was beauty's prerequisite. Relative or comparative beauty on the other hand, 'is that which we perceive in objects commonly considered as *imitations* or *resemblances* to something else'.¹

Unlike his contemporary at Marischal College, Thomas Blackwell, Hutcheson did not grade the poet's ability to represent the natural world. There was no differentiation along the lines of emulation as a higher form and imitation as a lower form of literary production. Hutcheson was content to locate the appreciation of relative beauty solely in the imitation of another object. However, he was clear that this was the type of beauty which an author must represent most accurately if they intended to produce works of quality. It is therefore worth quoting Hutcheson at length on his theorem:

This relative beauty is what they should principally endeavour to obtain, as the peculiar beauty of their works. By the *Moratae Fabulae*, or the ἠθῆ of Aristotle, we are not to understand virtuous [manners] (manners in a moral sense – 1st, 2nd, 3rd editions) but a just representation of manners or characters of the persons to whom they are ascribed in epic and dramatic poetry. Perhaps very good reasons may be suggested from the nature of our passions to prove that a poet should not [draw his characters especially virtuous]. These characters indeed abstractly considered might give more pleasure, and have more beauty than the imperfect ones which occur in life with a mixture of good and evil; but it may suffice at present to suggest against this choice that we have more lively ideas of imperfect men with all their passions, than of morally perfect heroes such as really never occur to our observation, and of which consequently we cannot judge exactly as to their agreement with the copy. And farther, through consciousness of our own state we are more nearly touched and affected by the imperfect characters, since in them we see represented, in the persons of others, the contrasts of inclinations, and the struggles between the passions of self-love and those of honour and virtue which we often feel in our own breasts. This is the perfection of beauty for which Homer is justly admired, as well as for the variety of his characters.²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42

² *Ibid.*, p. 55

At first glance Hutcheson's appeal that the poets should take care not to represent a wholly virtuous character would appear to be at odds with his conception of the innate goodness of people, and his philosophical belief that people are naturally disposed to do good. Surely under these circumstances it would be better to follow a moral paradigm to keep the reader on the right path, than to have them potentially corrupted by the moral laxity of the author's protagonists? This is not the case, as he realised that such a depiction, while correct in theory, had no practical application in the real world where men's characters are not impeccable moral bastions, but are in fact subject to imperfections. Crucially, for the enjoyment of the text, imperfect characters are more beneficial to the reader as they can more easily associate and therefore sympathise with them to a greater degree, than if they appear to be operating on a different moral plain from the reader. This reinforces Leechman's observation that Hutcheson did not feel the need to remain a strictly didactic teacher at all times.¹ To do so creates two problems. Initially from an aesthetic point of view it spoils the enjoyment of the reader, as they are not able to associate with the characters. In turn this impairs Hutcheson's belief that the poet should attempt to imitate what he observes in the world. If he attempts to fill his work with characters who cannot, and do not exist in real life, the result will be detached

¹ For Peter Kivy the anti-didactic thread of Hutcheson's thought in terms of poetic output resonates with Percy Bysshe Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* (1820) where he states, 'Didactic poetry is my abhorrence. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into the dust, although they would bear the harvest of happiness'. Shelley, quoted in, Kivy, *Inquiry*, p. 10 However, to locate this idea closer to home, Tobias Smollett's anti-hero in the novel *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) is representative of anti-didactic writing. Fathom is morally reprehensible, and ultimately receives his comeuppance. However, the fact that he is the main character and therefore has to carry the audience for a large section of the book demonstrates that Hutcheson's theory of not representing a character in a wholly virtuous light was being pushed to new limits in literary productions by Scottish authors. *Ferdinand Count Fathom* was not warmly received by the public on its release. However it is one of the most psychological of Smollett's novels and shows that the moral philosophy prevalent in Scottish universities was being tested in a literary medium.

indifference rather than warm engagement. Secondly, the sense perception of beauty will become distorted as the production ceases to imitate the character of man. As a result of this the production is likely to produce a kind of deformity, which in Hutcheson's language is simply the absence of beauty. Since the sense of beauty gives a positive pleasure to the recipient, the absence of that beauty, whether in a painting or a work of literature will produce disappointment in the observer.

His conception of a reader sympathising with a character is reminiscent of Horace's motto, in that if a person is to truly understand and appreciate the situation of another it should stand to reason that that person should have some experience of the event. A very clear line can be drawn to Hutcheson's student Adam Smith and his philosophies in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) which also advocate the view that one who has experienced similar situations is in a better position to sympathise, as their feelings more closely correspond with the protagonist. In part Hutcheson's sympathetic association through aesthetic sentiment was in answer the criticisms of Bernard Mandeville in his work *The Fable of the Bees* (1714) which emphasised the self-interest of man over that of the communal interest.

Hutcheson, although he used different terminology from Blackwell was in complete agreement about the reason why Homer was the best of the poets. More than anyone else he was able to accurately reflect the world around him. As Blackwell himself wrote in his work *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), 'I venture to affirm, that a poet describes nothing so happily, as what he has seen, nor talks masterly, but in his native Language, and proper Idiom; nor mimics truly other Manners, than those

whose Originals has practised and known.'¹ Blackwell was keen to show that the bard, because he observed the world around him and emulated the manners of the times, followed the correct rules for the production of quality literature. For Blackwell this was very much an external sense, and it was reinforced by his own analytic-rationalist method whereby to better understand the mindset of Homer he ought to be investigated through religion, history, manners, language and rhythm. Hutcheson arrived at the same conclusion about the ability of Homer to write timeless poetry, but from a moral perspective it had a more internal aspect, as he could stir the feelings of men because he could represent them in the most accurate, and hence, beautiful way.

The poet's capacity to imitate was a concept that was of great concern to the ancients. Aristotle in particular wrote at length about this subject, using the term *mimesis* to describe the poetic action of imitation. In translating the word one must be careful in exchanging *mimesis* for imitation, as in a similar fashion to Blackwell he never claimed that base imitation allied itself with quality literature. He stated that,

Poetry in general can be seen to owe its existence to two causes, and these are rooted in nature. First, there is man's natural propensity, from childhood onwards, to engage in mimetic activity (and this distinguishes man from other creatures, that he is thoroughly mimetic and through *mimesis* takes his first steps in understanding). Second, there is the pleasure which all men take in mimetic objects.²

Both of his observations link to the explanations for poetical production in the two Scottish professors. His first observation was the basis for Blackwell's theory which he added to by constructing the framework of the analytic and rationalist method. The second provides a connection with Hutcheson's ideas on aesthetics, as it refers directly to

¹ Thomas Blackwell, *An Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (London, 1735), p. 29

² Aristotle, quoted in, Stephen Halliwell, *The Poetics of Aristotle* (London, 1987), p. 34

the pleasure which men receive from such objects. Certainly Aristotle would not have been aware of, nor would he have been trying to create either the system which Blackwell constructed, or the model for sense perception which Hutcheson advocated. In fact, in the case of sense perception one must be absolutely clear that Aristotle would have been completely at odds with the philosophy of Hutcheson. When Aristotle referred to natural beauty he comprehended it as the purpose or function which gave significance to a creature's form, and which saw an end product to the object. So because his view of nature was teleological it should enable the reader to see more clearly that his theory of artistic form did not depend on abstract standards which were a foundation stone of Hutcheson's system.

Although Hutcheson had a powerful appreciation of the classics, and in particular the works of Cicero and Horace, he was not adverse to revising and refuting the classical doctrines which did not fit the modern world. The works of Cicero greatly influenced Hutcheson, and in particular his work *De Officiis*. In borrowing from this source it enabled him to extend his own studies in moral philosophy to its practical application in a civil society. This afforded him a wider scope in transmitting his own ideas. Nevertheless, Franklin Court has argued that as a result of this he 'promoted, consequently a rather predictable brand of Ciceronian Humanism that linked a variety of academic subjects, including the study of Rhetoric and belles-lettres, with practical social concerns'.¹ This viewpoint suggests that by 'predictable brand', Hutcheson had succeeded only in rehashing classical ideas, and tamely placed them into an eighteenth century framework. However, he was instead on the cusp of a new brand of rhetoric and

¹ Franklin Court, 'The Early impact of Scottish Literary Teaching in North America', in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 136

belles-lettres. Furthermore he also took on the modern philosophers who he believed had promulgated a false perception of the nature of man, and he was scathing in his criticism of Thomas Hobbes whose own philosophical foundation stone, that man was inherently a selfish being, clashed violently with the Hutchesonian belief in the good of man channelled through the moral sense. It was Hutcheson's investigations into the causes of laughter which provided the most lucid and entertaining example of these two systems locking horns. Hobbes very much sided with the ancients in his belief that there was but one species of laughter, and it took the form of ridicule. This theory was taken from the works of Aristotle who first associated laughter with ridicule and denigration, and its use against targets regarded as shameful. The Greeks would have applauded this as it tied comedy to derision in a culture which possessed a strongly developed sensitivity to public reproach and dishonour. While this may have been true in Aristotle's time and therefore wholly appropriate to the manners of the age, for Hutcheson it would be a concept out of place in the modern world, and consequently one ripe for reappraisal. For example, one is apt to laugh at Homer when he compares Ajax unwillingly retreating to an ass driven out of a cornfield; or when he compares him to a boar; or Ulysses tossing all night without sleep through anxiety to a pudding frying on the coals. Those three similes in Hutcheson's age had low and base ideas associated with them, which they probably would not have had in Homer's days. Even though they produce laughter, few men would do this owing to a feeling of superiority over Homer. It is more likely that the juxtaposition of incongruous images of nobleness and baseness creates an amusing picture in the mind of the reader. Nevertheless Hobbes argued that, 'Laughter is nothing else but some sudden glory, arising from a conception of some eminency in ourselves, by

comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly: for men laugh at the follies of themselves past, when they come suddenly to remembrance, except when they bring with them any present dishonour'.¹ Hutcheson noted that Addison and Steele in the *Spectator* No. 47 adapted this idea directly from Hobbes's philosophy. Hutcheson was ultimately scornful on the grounds that if such a notion were true, humour could only exist at times when one person felt themselves to be superior to another. Under this rule it would follow that any occasion where one person felt superior to another would produce laughter, which Hutcheson dismissed as palpably absurd. In reality, laughter could arise without any imagined superiority; instead, parody, burlesque and wit were the means by which one could induce laughter. He did not dismiss Hobbes's belief that laughter could arise from ridicule, but he was adamant that it was but one form of laughter which could exist.

That then which seems generally the cause of laughter is the bringing together of images which have contrary additional ideas, as well as some resemblance in the principal idea: this contrast between ideas of grandeur, dignity, sanctity, perfection, and ideas of meanness, baseness, profanity, seems to be the very spirit of burlesque; and the greatest part of our raillery and jest is founded upon it.²

Hutcheson offered an example of this juxtaposition of high and low imagery coming together to create a humorous picture in an anecdote about Archibald Pitcairne:

Many an orthodox Scotch Presbyterian, of which sect few accuse of disregard for the holy scriptures, has been put to it to preserve his gravity, upon hearing the application of Scripture made by his countryman Dr. Pitcairn, as he observed a crowd in the streets about a mason, who had fallen along with his scaffold, and was overwhelmed with the ruins of the chimney which he had been building, and which fell immediately after the

¹ Thomas Hobbes, quoted in, Francis Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 103

² Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 109

fall of the poor mason: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.' And yet few imagine themselves superior either to the apostle or the doctor. Their superiority to the poor mason, I am sure, could never have raised such laughter, for this occurred to them before the doctor's consolation. In this case no opinion of superiority could have occasioned the laughter, unless we say that people imagined themselves superior to the doctor in religion: but imagined superiority to a doctor in religion is not a matter so rare as to raise sudden joy; and with people who value religion, the impiety of another is no matter of laughing.¹

The anecdote clearly demonstrates that high and low associations of the words used was the catalyst for the laughter because of the absurd image which it conjured in the hearer's mind. There are no feelings of superiority over the unfortunate mason, nor is the laughter induced by any superiority over religion. Throughout this depiction of laughter, one should never lose sight of the aesthetic engine which powers Hutcheson's theories on how to deploy it in the most effective manner. In order to produce wit one must be able to create similes and metaphors from objects of dignity and grandeur, and in turn this lends itself to the production of heroic poetry. For the purposes of laughter a similar process takes place, but instead of solely attempting to use objects of dignity and grandeur they ought to be mixed together with ideas of meanness, baseness, so as to create a juxtaposition between high and low. A caveat should be offered here when alluding to ideas of meanness and baseness. Hutcheson did not mean that these were appropriate subjects for the production of all forms of literature, but when used correctly to produce laughter they were acceptable and necessary to the process. Should one concentrate exclusively on baseness, unless they are deliberately attempting to portray something which is mean and base, they will not succeed in raising any laughter.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105

Furthermore, Hutcheson extends this type of wit to the art of punning, which when used spontaneously is apt to give pleasure to those who hear it. On the other hand, a premeditated action of the same kind is more likely to lower the reader's opinion of the writer, as it is not designed to produce pleasure but is more in line with Hobbesian ideas on ridicule. Actually in this instance, it is unusual that Aristotle is closer to Hutchesonian thinking on the inappropriate use of laughter, for he argues that a figure on the stage with an ugly mask, although not representing the actor himself is a metaphor for an ugly individual. As he insists that the mocking of an individual is ethically offensive, the invitation of the comedic play to laugh at that individual compounds an ethical mistake with a poetical one. This observation is one which Hutcheson would have backed wholeheartedly, not only for the impact that it would have had on literature, but more importantly to him, for the wider implications which it would have had on the moral sense. Ultimately Hutcheson chose to believe that laughter was primarily a benevolent quality which had a significant role to play in the running of a successful society. It had a function to perform as a general socializing influence in that society, almost like a lubricant to aid social interaction, as well as helping to build a moral community. It also had a specific role to play in addressing certain moral weaknesses, notably, intellectual fanaticism. It was a powerful weapon against an inflexible intellect, and in Hutcheson's eyes it could at times be more effective than a sermon in educating men out of their foibles.¹ Ironically, just a few decades later, Lord Kames, a man noted for both his wit as a man and his judiciousness on the bench, argued that the two positions were not mutually tenable in an individual. Kames held the notion that: 'Wit consists chiefly in joining things by distant and fanciful relations, which surprise because they are

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109

unexpected. Such relations being of the slightest kind, readily occur to that person only who makes every relation equally welcome. Wit, upon that account, is, in a good measure, incompatible with solid judgement; which, neglecting trivial relations, adheres to what are substantial and permanent'.¹ Such a viewpoint would preclude those who deployed witticisms and humour in their work from performing an adequate role as literary critics, but for Hutcheson, wit and judgement were not mutually exclusive.²

Metaphor and simile are components which resonate deeply in Hutcheson's thought. As well as having an impact on the effects of laughter, they are important for the production of literature and consequently inform the moral sense. In the *Inquiry*, he stated that,

Many other beauties of poetry may be reduced under this class of *relative beauty*. The *probability* is absolutely necessary to make us imagine *resemblance*. It is by resemblance that *similitudes*, *metaphors* and *allegories* are made beautiful, whether either the subject or the thing compared to it have beauty or not... this is the foundation of the rule of studying *decency* in metaphors and similes as well as likeness. The *measures* and *cadence* are instances of harmony, and come under the head of absolute beauty.³

Metaphor and simile have a paramount importance for the aesthetic sense of the *Inquiry*. By their very visual nature they resonate with the individual. And just as Hutcheson was at pains to point out that while individuals all have a shared sense perception, as the

¹ Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (3 vols., London, 1762), I, p. 28

² The division of wit and judgment to which Kames alluded was identified, and described in very similar terminology by George Turnbull in *The Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1740), Turnbull argued 'Wit is justly defined to consist in the quick and ready assemblage of such ideas as have any analogy, likeness, or resemblance, especially in those circumstances which are not commonly attended to, so that the resemblance, when it is pointed out, at once strikes by its evidence, and surprises by its uncommonness. Judgment, on the other hand, is rightly said to lie in nicely distinguishing the disagreements and variances or differences of ideas... The improvement of the one, certainly very much depends upon accustomance to assemble and join; and the improvement of the other upon accustomance to disunite, break and separate'. Turnbull went on to hypothesize that as the great geniuses of mankind fell into these two categories, so too would the moral character of individuals lean one way or the other. George Turnbull, *The Principles of Moral Philosophy* (2 vols., London, 1740), I, p. 95

³ Hutcheson, *Inquiry*, p. 56

images themselves will provoke different reactions within a person, so too did metaphors and similes provoke a variety of responses. His allusion to measures and cadences as instances of harmony, and therefore mediums of beauty, was something which James Geddes picked up on in the 1740s. Although a student at Edinburgh University under Colin Maclaurin, he was tutored as a boy by William Leechman. Troubled by ill health, he died in 1747. However according to James Wodrow, 'After Mr. Geddes's death, Mr. Leechman revised his papers, and published in the year 1748 his Posthumous *Essay on the Composition and Manner of Writing of the Antients, Particularly Plato*; a book which deserves to be better known among scholars, than I imagine it is'.¹ Despite his praise for the book it has remained obscure to this day, and those who did take notice of it dismissed it as unfinished and juvenile.² The influence of Leechman and indeed Hutcheson can clearly be detected in the work of Geddes. With respect to both literature and rhetoric he stated, 'It is the beautiful, and harmonious structure of the periods, which adds a dignity and grace to either a poem, or oration'.³ In certain respects his observations on the ancient methods of composition cannot be entirely transported into a modern setting, such as when he enthuses about the harmony of Thucydides. He argued that the historian's decision to truncate portions of certain sentences helped to transmit ideas with more fluency, and equally words which in English would be superfluous added to the harmony of the work, stating, 'One is delighted with a redundancy of this kind, when, without it, the sentence would not sufficiently fill the ear, nor the symphony be

¹ Wodrow, 'Account of the Authors Life', I, p. 71

² Reid, *Divinity Professors*, p. 257

³ James Geddes, *An Essay on the Composition and Manner of Writing of the Antients, Particularly Plato* (Glasgow, 1748), pp. 2-3

complete'.¹ That is not to say that Geddes did not have ideas that could resonate with a modern audience. Indeed, he shared with Blackwell and Hutcheson the core concept of how to write quality literature. 'Tis certain there can be no *decorum*, no real beauty, without adhering to the truth of character, and a just imitation of nature... Deviations from nature are no doubt unpardonable; yet each genius has his own peculiar way of painting it; the passions and affections of the human mind are, generally speaking, the same in all men: but it does not therefore follow that each Author must use the same manner in describing them, or the actions resulting from them'.² Although he used none of Hutcheson's terminology, his notion of beauty as a form of unity amidst variety was clearly evident in Geddes's work. He took into account both individual response to the production as well as the individual's choice in the process of creating such a work. The imitation of nature was the surest rule in writing true literary pieces, and Geddes was careful to qualify the imitation of nature by stating that it must be a 'just imitation of nature'. His observations on the passions of individuals were also reminiscent of Hutcheson's philosophy. As with sense perception, it was a quality which every person possessed, but which was stimulated in a variety of different ways, producing varying reactions to events, which in turn only served to reinforce the doctrine of unity amidst variety.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5

² *Ibid.*, p. 22

³ Geddes goes even further than this when he starts to introduce the beauty of scale and proportion and the use of numbers into beautiful composition. 'Whatever renders a period sweet and pleasant, makes it also graceful; a good ear is the gift of nature, it may be much improv'd, but not acquired, by art; whoever is possessed of it, will scarcely need dry critical precepts to enable him to judge of a true rythmus, and melody of composition: just numbers, accurate proportions, a musical symphony, magnificent figures, and that *decorum*, which the result of all these, are *unison* to the human mind; we are so framed by nature, that their charm is irresistible'. *Ibid.*, p. 11

The influence of William Leechman was understandably also evident in the works of Geddes. In particular he took from Leechman his ideas on eloquence, the danger it had of corrupting those held in its grasp, but ultimately the ability which it had to educate and enlighten a person when it was used in the service of truth. In his sermon, 'The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel' (1741) he was adamant that the preacher should adhere to Horace's motto before he started to converse with his own people. This was because in Leechman's eyes it was not difficult to raise prejudice and undesirable passions in those who were ignorant with a small gift for rhetoric, but it was much harder to instil in their hearts a love, of God and mankind, and a love of truth and virtue. 'As long as we discover a real tenderness for their interest and characters we may justly hope they will hearken to our reasons, and lay open their minds to conviction. But as soon as we betray anger and bitterness, or use them harshly, we thereby prevent all the effect of the strongest arguments'.¹ Geddes shared his tutor's optimistic view of eloquence and its ability to touch peoples' hearts with a simple truth: 'If there are yet in the heart the least remains of honesty, sympathy, and kind affections, instantly they take fire, when thus powerfully excited. In those generous moments, selfish designs, envious thoughts, and dark intrigues, are ashamed and lose their power'.²

Leechman's tenure as the professor of Divinity at the University marked a change in the way that theology was taught at Glasgow. For even though his reign began inauspiciously, he soon established himself as a lecturer both learned in his education and pious in his disposition. Hutcheson himself had foreseen this change, arguing that if he

¹ William Leechman, 'The Temper, Character, and Duty of a Minister of the Gospel', in, William Leechman, *Sermons* (2 vols., London, 1789), I, p. 128

² Geddes, *Essay*, pp. 11-12

succeeded in winning the chair, 'it will put a new face upon Theology in Scotland'.¹ He was free from bigotry, and reminded his students about the dangers of dogmatic belief systems. As a result, he himself did not adhere to a specific system of theology or philosophy.² For him, free and independent enquiry was of paramount importance, and as a consequence he was scrupulous about presenting both sides of an argument, never offering absolutist opinion, or infallible judgements, so that his students were free to make up their own minds about the topics they were studying. This has led H. M. B. Reid to dismiss his contribution to Scottish theology as unimportant, and he accused him of being evasive, precisely because he gave no infallible judgements.³ However, this misses the point of what Leechman was trying to achieve. Nevertheless, his students appear to have appreciated his intentions. William M'Gill approved of this style of teaching, recounting that Leechman encouraged literature and free enquiry, while at the same time exciting his charges to the love of Christian truth and piety all of which aided them in learning how to form correct sentiments for their own benefit.⁴ Leechman also kept his course fresh by alternating the lectures he gave. One year he would lecture on the evidences of Christianity, and the next on the compositions of sermons. Even his theological teachings blended religious instruction with literary appreciation. When

¹ Francis Hutcheson, Letters, GUL MS Gen. 1018.15

² Thomas Kennedy, 'William Leechman, Pulpit Eloquence and the Glasgow Enlightenment', in, Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher eds., *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (East Linton, 1997), p. 62. Leechman's system of education is remarkably close to David Fordyce's system which he set out in his *Dialogues Concerning Education* (1745). Like Leechman, Fordyce did not wish to be tied down to a specific model and instead valued lucidity of choice leading to free and independent enquiry. In his description of his academy's teaching methods Fordyce stated, 'No Regard is paid to Names, or mere Authority, however, great, in Philosophy; we feel none of the Restraints or Bias of Systems. No Embargos are laid upon any Branch of Knowledge; all Monopolies are discouraged. The Commerce of Letters is alike open to all, every one may chuse his Side, or oppose just as he pleases'. David Fordyce, *Dialogues Concerning Education* (2 vols., London, 1745), I, pp. 21-22

³ Reid, *Divinity Professors*, p. 255

⁴ William M'Gill, *A Practical Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh, 1786), p. 185

lecturing on the New Testament he would approach it both theologically and critically.¹ For students who demonstrated a particular talent for literature Leechman would invite them to join him in his private library from five to eight on Fridays. However, the professor himself lacked the ability to carry on polite conversation, and instead resorted to delivering a short lecture, which reduced the enjoyment of those in attendance. Nevertheless Leechman was not the only one in his family who had an appreciation for belles-lettres. Carlyle who was one of those six or seven invited to the library remembered that Mrs Leechman possessed a talent for conversation and would engage in debates concerning plays, novels, poetry and the fashions.² Born Bridget Balfour, she was the sister of the Edinburgh professor of Moral Philosophy James Balfour; however judging by the quality of his lectures, it would appear that she possessed talents greater than his.³ While Leechman may have lacked conversational ability, it did not reduce his standing as a lecturer at the university. Nor did it affect his reputation; for Carlyle, who would go on to become a minister himself, acknowledged that he enlarged his thinking on theology more in the space of two years than the professor at Edinburgh could have done in twenty.⁴ Carlyle was particularly taken by the way in which Leechman used the classical authors to inform his theological teachings, and saw no problem with employing

¹ Reid, *Divinity Professors*, p. 254

² Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 84

³ Balfour was not highly regarded as a lecturer, his lectures were poorly attended, and he himself was regarded as both an ineffective speaker and an ineffectual teacher. He gained recognition for his philosophical attacks on David Hume, publishing them in, *A delineation of the nature and obligations of morality, with reflexions upon Mr. Hume's book* (1753), although it was published anonymously through his family's publishing house. Hume wished to engage in a debate with Balfour, but he sourly rejected his overtures. Richard B. Sher, 'Professors of Virtue: The Social History of the Edinburgh Moral Philosophy Chair in the Eighteenth Century', in, M. A. Stewart, ed., *Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 87-127

⁴ Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 22

the best aspects of their philosophical and rhetorical systems in order to aid mankind's understanding of the truth of the Scriptures.

For a man who was intent on uncovering truth through a thorough investigation of the Scriptures, it is perhaps surprising that Leechman's preferred model for the application of eloquence of the pulpit was Cicero. He stuck rigidly to Cicero's three rules of eloquence, outlined in *De Inventione*, which were: to inform the understanding; to convince the judgement; and to move the passions. He was careful to add a caveat with regard to moving those passions, and bearing in mind what he had said about provoking prejudice, he outlined his intentions by stating that it was the duty of the preacher 'To raise some that are too low to a higher degree, and to bring some lower that are already too high, and sometimes to exchange one passion for another, raising it in place of another'.¹ The fact that Leechman embraced the ancients even when dealing with such a sensitive topic as religion was indicative of the moderate atmosphere which was pervading Scotland, at least in academic circles, at the mid-point of the eighteenth century. That a man who faced charges of heresy in the 1740s could become the moderator of the General Assembly in 1757 was a testament to this change; and these changes in Glasgow were due in no small part to men like Hutcheson and Leechman who brought a more liberal agenda to the curriculum at the university. Leechman however, like his fellow academics was not a man to follow blindly the teachings of the ancients. He was aware just how much they could inform and enhance his works, while at the same time he acknowledged that they were not always of great benefit. 'We need not doubt but that many rules in publick sermons are contrary to those of the Greeks and Romans, which were made on different occasions; yet most of them may be transferred to the

¹ William Leechman, 'Treatise of Rhetoric', 16th May 1763, GUL MS Gen.51, fol. 3

sermons'.¹ Although adherence to the truth of the scriptures was of paramount importance, the ancient moralists added greatly to learning through their works on logic, and human understanding.² According to his own student, James Wodrow, who attended his lectures between 1747 and 1753, Leechman attempted to move the passions in a very precise and controlled manner:

He showed the power of a warm or of a vigorous imagination in heightening the passions, by placing the motives directly suited to raise them in a stronger light than they would have otherwise appeared to the mind. On the other hand, he marked the danger, the great danger, of too much imagery, and even of interweaving anything foreign with the immediate motives, anything which has not a direct tendency to excite or heighten the feeling intended to be raised. He insisted with Horace, that the speaker should be first moved himself before he can move others.³

This passage highlights three important developments in moderate Presbyterian thought. The first is the return to the classics. No longer the sole preserve of the Episcopalian elite, and a badge of learning, the literati in the pre-1750 era were shining new light on what the ancients could teach the moderns. Secondly, he was shrewd enough to realise that pedantry was more likely to damage one's cause than to aid it. The danger of adding too much imagery or too many proofs was a trap into which no less a person than Thomas Ruddiman fell.⁴ Leechman was astute enough to realise that to bring in too many proofs

¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 19

² Leechman's constant recourse to the Scriptures excused him from a stinging rebuke by John Witherspoon on his perception of the new waves of philosophers' attitudes to the ancients. Speaking in the persona of a moderate preacher in his wickedly sarcastic *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1753) Witherspoon says, 'Recommending virtue from the authority and examples of the heathen is not only highly proper, because they were highly virtuous, but it has the manifest advantage attending it, that it is a proper way of reasoning to two quite opposite kinds of persons... It is well known that there are multitudes in our islands who reckon Socrates and Plato to have been greater men than the Apostles... Therefore let religion be constantly and uniformly called virtue, and let the heathen philosophers be set up as the great patterns and promoters of it'. John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon*, (9 vols., Edinburgh, 1804-1805), II, p. 17

³ Wodrow, 'Account', p. 57

⁴ See Chapter 3

would only result in overloading the memory and confounding the judgment, which was that last thing that a preacher should be aiming to do. Thirdly, his sermon technique refuted all the allegations of the Episcopalians from the early part of the century that extremism and fanaticism were the companions of the Presbyterian preacher. In *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd: or, the Folly of their Teaching Discover'd* (1692) the author complained, 'Now the World knows they are not led by Reason, nor Religion, but by Fancy and Imagination... What Ministers can be expected from the Choice of a People void of Common Sense, and guided by irregular Passions, who torture the Scripture, making it speak the Language of their deluded Imaginations'.¹ Certainly this was a criticism which could not be applied to Leechman's style of sermonising. He was just as concerned with appealing to the passions in an appropriate manner, and was adamant that while the imagination should be stimulated in the interests of entertaining an audience, it should not come at the expense of, or be subordinate to, the simple message of the preacher. Besides, he had no qualms about appealing to the passions in general for he believed that God had put the passions in man, and therefore it was up to preachers as his servants to appeal to them in the most suitable manner. Finally, Leechman's concept of the imagination ran along the same sympathetic lines which Smith identified in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, but which had been on the educational agenda at Glasgow since the time of Hutcheson, and to a lesser extent Arbuckle. Although Leechman conceived of the imagination along the lines of Horace's

¹ [Gilbert Crokatt & John Munroe], *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd: or, the Folly of their Teaching Discover'd*, (London, 1738), p. 10

motto, he demonstrated the link between the moral sense, and the aesthetic internal sense which Hutcheson had developed.¹

In his 'Treatise', Leechman set out the extent to which the imagination should be stirred by the use of metaphor and simile:

It is necessary an orator should strike the Imagination with metaphors, similes and lively pictures of the things; but we may observe this may be used by the Poets, or may do for Romance-writers, but certainly is unfit for any sermon or serious discourse. It may be used in the composition of Sermons, but only as subservient to the other three points. [The three rules of Cicero].²

He made a distinction in that what was appropriate for literature was not something which should appear in the pulpit. Indeed one of his rules for regulating the passions related specifically to literature. 'When reading books even the geniuses of the age (Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Bolingbroke) one is to read critically, to exercise judgement in the most cool and deliberate manner... with candour and modesty indeed, but at the same time with firmness'.³ It is surprising that Leechman's work on rhetoric, even though it remained unpublished, is overlooked when one considers its importance next to the published works of David Fordyce and Hugh Blair. It represents a bridge between Fordyce's *Theodorus: or, the Art of Preaching* (1752) and Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* (1783), of which chapters 29-30 were devoted to pulpit eloquence.

¹ As Walter Jackson Bate has noted, this was indicative of the continually reiterated assertion in the criticism of the period that taste and morality were psychologically dependent on each other. They could both augment each other's growth and delicacy, and a decline in one would initiate the decline in the other. Although he does not include him in the group of Scottish critics who think along these lines – Gerard, Ogilvie, Beattie and Blair, one may add George Turnbull to the list. Walter Jackson Bate, 'The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism', *English Literary History* 12 (1945), p. 146

² Leechman, 'Rhetoric', fol. 5 He goes on to extrapolate the point by stating, 'We must define without metaphors as much as may be. A definition must be plain and simple; similitudes are very improper, and only please men's imagination, and produce nothing fixed on them, so must be very improper for Sermons. Sometimes it may be necessary to separate or distinguish one passion from another; for tho' simple, yet it may be somehow naturally connected with others, and may be very easily confounded in the hearer's imagination'. *Ibid.*, fol. 24

³ Leechman, *Sermons*, II, p. 184

While Blair had much more to say about the literary effects of pulpit eloquence than his Glasgow counterpart, Leechman did begin to probe the ability of preaching to have a literary effect on people, as well as the more obvious aural effect. Equally a comparison with *Theodorus* is significant as it reveals the extent to which moral psychology is prevalent in the composition of sermons. Fordyce was more scientific in his approach to the passions, as he made detailed observations of both the affections and the passions, and he deliberately catalogued as many of the passions which he could come up with and their objects. Leechman was far less scientific in his approach, and instead relied more heavily on an intuitive system of analysis of human nature, and in this respect he was close to Aristotle's commonsense reflection upon human nature.

As well as being a moral psychologist, a preacher, according to Leechman, must also perform the duties of a lawyer in persuading an audience.

Suppose the venerable Character of the sacred Scriptures, or any particular good Man in it, such as David's Samuel's, Joseph's or our Saviour's be attacked, (as is very often the case) or any objections as that Scripture is not entire, that it is corrupted. It is then the Preacher's Business to vindicate Revelation, and to represent it as entire and pure. So that there must be both Accusation and Defence: He must first vindicate Revelation in generals, and then the particular precepts and Doctrine contained in it.¹

Regardless of whether the Scriptures should simply be a matter of truth, Leechman demonstrated that they still had to be defended against attacks from critics. Therefore his own legal metaphor is appropriate here in persuading his readership about the duties of a preacher. However, this deployment of pulpit eloquence akin to the role of legal eloquence would certainly not have been shared by Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh. In *An Idea of Modern Eloquence of the Bar* (1681) he staunchly advocated that this was

¹ Leechman, 'Rhetoric', fol. 7

the premier form of eloquence, and when compared with pulpit eloquence, it was superior on the grounds that, 'Preachers, secur'd from all Answer and Interruption, do calmly deliver the Sermons they have studied at their own Leisure, without any Noise or Disturbance: We go to Church, possess'd with a firm Belief of their Doctrine before we hear it, and are rather persuaded by the Truth of the Subject than the *Eloquence* of the *Preacher*'.¹ Mackenzie does touch on a point about which Leechman would have unreservedly agreed. The truth of the subject is far more important than the eloquent embellishments which are mere affectations. It would appear that his own student Wodrow would also confirm this assessment. 'His excellence as a preacher lay in carrying his hearers along with him, by the irresistible truth and force of what was said; and not in pleasing them with an agreeable elegance of language and harmony of periods'.² David Hume, whom Leechman often took to task over his sceptical philosophy, also made some critical observations on the composition of his sermons. While he acknowledged that they were 'clear and manly' in their style, he shared with Wodrow the opinion that they were not harmonious.³ Leechman was ably defended by his old friend Hutcheson, who recognised some shortcomings in his style, but was nevertheless warm in his appreciation and wise to his attributes in the pulpit. 'You never knew a better, sweeter man, of excellent literature and except his air and a little roughness of voice, the best preacher imaginable'.⁴ He went on to write in another letter, 'you may represent, what is abundantly known, that he is universally approved for

¹ George Mackenzie, *An Idea of Modern Eloquence of the Bar* (Edinburgh, 1711), pp. 3-4

² Wodrow, 'Account', pp. 101-102

³ David Hume, quoted in, Reid, *Divinity Professors*, p. 246

⁴ Francis Hutcheson to Thomas Drennan 5 August 1743, quoted in, Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 88

literature and eloquence'.¹ Alexander Carlyle, who attended the University in the same year as Leechman took up the divinity chair, was likewise impressed with the potency of his style. He recalled that Leechman,

Was a distinguished preacher, and was followed when he was occasionally in Edinburgh. His appearance was that of an ascetic, reduced by fasting and prayer; but in aid of fine composition, he delivered his sermons with such fervent spirit, and in so persuasive a manner, as captivated every audience.²

Lord Woodhouselee went even further, and maintained that his style and composition had more elegance than even Hutcheson himself.³

Despite both the mixed reception, and the practical criticisms of Leechman's pulpit eloquence, he was fully aware of the importance of beauty in a composition, and in certain respects he qualified some of Hutcheson's ideas on beauty with regard to unity amidst variety. When delivering a sermon, Leechman insisted that the speaker, in the interests of keeping things simple should divide up the ideas contained in them to make them more accessible to the audience. The individual parts however, ought to come together and lead to one single point, as radii to a centre.⁴ The ability to do this was exactly the same technique that was used in the construction of Epic poetry, as all the individual books must come together to serve the whole. Therefore while Leechman was in agreement with his friend about his conception of unity amidst variety as a foundation for beauty, he recognised that there could be subsets within the larger whole. In fact, if properly used it could make things even more beautiful:

¹ Francis Hutcheson, to William Mure 23 November 1743, quoted in, Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 90

² Carlyle, *Autobiography*, pp. 67-68

³ Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Honourable Henry Home of Kames* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1807; *Supplement* 1809), I, p. 14

⁴ Leechman, 'Rhetoric', fol. 41

Another evident advantage is that this order gives Beauty to the Composition, and the want of it is the principal cause of all Deformity and languid weakness of many discourses, which want strength and nerves. And tho' our Hearers or readers should not discern this want of order, or know what part is deficient, yet all feel the want of it: it is this cause that clear order (*lucidus ordo*) assists the understanding of the speaker.¹

He then gave the example of a cluttered painting to demonstrate that if the images were crowded together the painting would lose its beauty, as we can see no unity of design.

When the images are not cluttered we can appreciate each individual aspect of the painting which builds into a final unity. The same can also be said of Sermons, because the preacher who moves to a single point by means of small steps will be a more successful preacher as he will engage the interest and therefore connect more effectively with his audience.

Leechman recognised that division was not one of the principal parts of oratory. Cicero and Isocrates used it very seldom, and Demosthenes not at all. It would seem that the use of division in oratory was an invention of the moderns which had taken its rise among the scholastic divines who first began to use it to a significant degree. The ancients, according to Leechman, were content to propose general heads on the matters about which they were to speak, but they would never refer to it after their introduction. This demonstrates Leechman's ability to create his own style of rhetoric and oratory, distinct from the classical models of the past and free from the bigoted and fanatical sermonising which had so antagonised the Episcopalians of an earlier age. Equally, he realised that the ancients could offer valuable advice on the construction of a

¹*Ibid.*, fol. 41

contemporary Christian composition, and where he felt this would be the greatest benefit to him and his audience he would include them.

As with Edinburgh and Aberdeen, Glasgow developed a bustling club scene in the second half of the eighteenth century which combined both literary investigations with scientific and economic enquiry. Indeed, Robert Simson founded one of the first such clubs to be established in Glasgow. It was an unofficial club that met in the Anderston district of the city, and hence it was named the Anderston Club. It existed from around the mid 1740s until 1765. Although no records of the club have survived, we know that the club met on Saturdays, and for a time Alexander Carlyle was one of the students admitted to the group. From him we know that despite the mathematical disposition of Simson the club discussed both philosophical and literary matters.¹ Simson appeared to keep the club a select affair, choosing only favourites to partake in the debates; nevertheless there were a number of significant men attached to the club. James Moor, William Cullen and Thomas Hamilton, professor of Anatomy and Botany in the university, and Professor Alexander Ross were members, as were younger men such as Carlyle, Adam Smith and Robert and Andrew Foulis.² As Dugald Stewart recounted in his *Account of the Life and Writings of Adam Smith* (1795) Smith's main interests while a student at the university were Mathematics and Natural Philosophy.³ This has led J. C. Bryce to surmise that it was from Simson that Smith learned his idea of a 'system', which was initially set out by the mathematician concerning his views on astronomy. There is a good case for this argument as Smith endeavoured to build his rhetorical system upon a

¹ Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 71

² John Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs* (Glasgow, 1864), p. 22

³ Dugald Stewart, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects by the Late Adam Smith... to which is prefixed, An Account of the Life and Writings of the author* (3 vols., London, 1795), I, p. 7

solid foundation of empiricism which Newton had fostered.¹ In the club itself however, science momentarily took a back seat to conviviality, and among the more light hearted distractions which members faced, were Simson's efforts to sing Greek odes set to modern music.² John Strang envisioned a club in which the criticism of Greek and Latin texts would give way to discussion of the works of Tobias Smollett, especially the novels *Roderick Random* (1748) and *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751), published in the hey-day of the club.³ Although this is pure conjecture on his part it is not outwith the realms of possibility that Smollett's work would have been discussed, for the reason that as a former student of the university, he included caricatures of some of the faculty members in his novels.⁴ The club continued to meet regularly, but once its founding member died so too did the club suffer its demise. Although we can only guess at what literary discussions they had, the very existence of the club demonstrates that there was a desire for belles-lettres which was met both inside and outside the University. Carlyle spoke of another two clubs of which he was a member during his stay in the city. The first was entirely a literary society, which met at the porter's lodge in the College, where the assembled members criticised books and wrote abridgements of them, with critical essays. In this respect, the activities of this group were not entirely removed from the

¹ Of the system he was trying to create Smith stated, 'In the same way in Nat[ural] Phil[osophy] or any other Science of that Sort we may either like Aristotle go over the Different branches in the order they happen to cast up to us, giving a principle commonly a new one for every phaenomenon; or in the manner of Sir Isaac Newton we may lay down certain principles known or proved in the beginning, from whence we account for the severall Phenomena, connecting all together by the same Chain'. Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed., J. C. Bryce (Oxford, 1983), pp. 145-146

² Coutts, *History of Glasgow*, p. 227

³ Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs*, pp. 26-27

⁴ John Johnstoun who held the Chair of Medicine at Glasgow from 1714 to 1751 is often cited as a prototype for Launcelot Crab, the underhanded surgeon to whom the eponymous hero is apprenticed. John Ramsay agreed with this assessment. Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, I, pp. 277-8. However there is an alternative version of the story which claims that one of the surgeons who taught Smollett, Thomas Crawford was a more likely candidate. For this version see: *The Emmet; A Selection of Original Essays, Tales, Anecdotes, Bon Mots, Choice Sayings, Etc.* (2 vols., Glasgow, 1824), I, p. 5

literary practices of Francis Hutcheson himself who would often make his students provide him with an abridged version of a literary work to demonstrate that they understood what they had read. The other club of which Carlyle spoke met every week in a tavern near Glasgow Cross, and contained members who were not intended for the study of theology. The topics for discussion were almost entirely literary, but appeared to be of such local reputation that even some of the ministers of the neighbourhood frequented the club.¹

Another Glasgow club with literary pretensions was the Hodge-Podge Club. It was created in 1750, yet did not start to take records until 1752, and had fortnightly meetings in a tavern in the city.² Although the names of those who instigated the society were not as renowned as those who attended Simson's club, it did count as one of its members, John Moore the biographer of Tobias Smollett and the author of *Zeluco*. The club, whose membership mainly comprised merchants, started as a literary society and the meetings shared the same motivations as the Edinburgh Select Society: to improve public speaking, as well as both political and literary composition.³ Indeed Moore appears to have provided a poetic work which attempted to depict the characters of those who attended.⁴ From the tone of the poem it was clear that the Hodge Podge club was very much a convivial club as much as it was concerned with literature.

¹ Carlyle, *Autobiography*, pp. 74-75

² For more on the Club see: Thomas F. Donald, *The Hodge Podge Club, 1752 – 1900* (Glasgow, 1900)

³ Strang, *Glasgow Clubs*, pp. 30-55

⁴ There appear to be two different versions of this poem. There is a manuscript copy in the National Library of Scotland: 'Verses On the Hotch Potch Club at Glasgow By the late Dr Moore', NLS MS 5003, fol. 107. There is an expanded version contained in Strang's book. Strang, *Glasgow Clubs*, pp. 41-43

Although Glasgow had a number of clubs in this period, the most important club in the city was the Literary Society which was founded in January 1752.¹ For the first three weeks book reviews were conducted, including Adam Smith on David Hume's *Essays on Commerce*.² The first regular meeting took place on the 7th February when James Moor delivered a paper, 'On Historical Composition'. Moor's paper is of literary significance because he placed a great emphasis on the kinship of history and poetry, which in his eyes created a uniform pattern that illustrated the events of the past. His opening remarks established the importance of developing the right kind of taste and method for historical writing, while at the same time acknowledging the high level of perfection in style that was necessary to produce poetry of quality:

The several kinds of fine writing require, each of them, a peculiar method, art, and taste, in their composition. Of these, one of the most useful and entertaining, is History; and, at the same time, one of the most difficult. The proper Art, and method, of Composition, in which a good Historian must excel, requires perhaps, not much less genius and skill, to execute in perfection, than that of any other kind of writing; without excepting poetry itself.³

Moor recounted that the ancients had disseminated the differing rules of eloquence that went into producing works of poetry, oratory and history, and argued that the rules for creating epic poetry were in fact the same for creating both tragedy and comedy. He went on to elaborate that these interlocking rules formed part of a system which accommodated all the sister arts of composition, painting, music, architecture and almost

¹ For more information on the club within a British context see: Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000)

² Coutts, *History of Glasgow*, p. 316

³ James Moor, *Essays: Read to a Literary Society; at their Weekly Meetings, within the college, at Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1759), p. 127. Moor likens the construction of a good history to the construction of an Epic poem. 'The Epic Poet, and Historian, propose to themselves the same general end. Both work on the same subject; and employ the same means. Both aim to entertain, and to instruct, mankind, from examples, of human life and actions, exhibited by narration'. *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138

every branch of taste. Clearly drawing from the aesthetic system of Hutcheson, Moor contended that there was, 'a regular unity of design; the subject formed into one intire and complete whole... all things conspiring to one end; to form, and finish up, this whole; and render it as complete, and beautiful as possible'.¹ Although Moor conceived of history writing of as much a literary endeavour as a representation of the truth, which would have infuriated Charles Mackie, the Edinburgh professor of Universal History, he shared with his professorial colleague the conviction that the historian who did not have a regard for time, and chronology would render his history useless.² Moor, of course, was not the first to notice the links between history and epic poetry. The Italian scholar Umberto Foglietta in his *De ratione scribendae historiae* (1574) drew several comparisons between the two arts. He argued that both were narrations, and both treated events which had actually occurred. Where he drew a distinction between the two was over history's reliance on the truth, as history – good history – could not exist without it. What Foglietta and Moor shared was the belief that the internal process needed to create poetry and history were in fact the same.³ The club was generously represented by the professors of the university: out of the initial twelve members nine of them taught at the college, but it also included Glasgow merchants, members of the local Presbyterian clergy and lawyers. Those listed as members for the first year include, Moor, Leechman, Hamilton, Cullen, Simson, Hume, Robert Foulis, John Anderson, Hercules Lindsay, and later Joseph Black.⁴ In the 1760s after he had taken over the chair in moral philosophy from Adam Smith, Thomas Reid who had done so much to establish the Aberdeen

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 134

² *Ibid.*, p. 140

³ Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., London, 1961), I, p. 15

⁴ Strang, *Glasgow Clubs*, pp. 21-22

Philosophical Society also attended the club.¹ Indeed, the week after Reid joined on November 9th 1764, Leechman read a paper to the society entitled, ‘Remarks on Mr Hume’s Natural History of Religion.’ This mixture of professorial talents illustrates that just as Simson’s club did not confine itself to the scientific realm, neither did the Literary Society focus exclusively on belles-lettres.² This is indicative of the way in which modern delineations of science and literature have distorted the reality of what these clubs stood for in the eighteenth century. For in that period philosophical and scientific works could be read out to members of the society and in turn receive critical feedback in exactly the same way that a piece of poetry or prose could have been. The Literary Society was a forum where research papers were delivered, and where questions were debated on subjects proposed by the society’s members. Each member of the society was encouraged to present a paper annually, and was also expected to introduce topics for discussion: failure to do so would result in a fine.³ It was in this society that Adam Smith supposedly read out his essays on Taste, Composition, and the History of Philosophy, which he had delivered while at Edinburgh.⁴ Unfortunately a large section of the club’s minutes, almost two thirds of their entire records are missing.⁵ Despite this, from the records that do survive we can build up a picture of a society responding critically to a

¹ For Reid’s activities in the club see: Kathleen Holcomb, ‘Thomas Reid in the Glasgow Literary Society’, in, Andrew Hook and Richard B. Sher, eds., *The Glasgow Enlightenment* (East Linton, 1997), pp. 95-110

² For more on the Glasgow Literary Society as a vehicle for the promotion of science and medicine see, Roger Emerson and Paul Wood, ‘Science and Enlightenment in Glasgow, 1690-1802’, in, Charles W. J. Withers and Paul Wood, eds., *Science and Medicine in the Scottish Enlightenment* (East Linton, 2002), pp. 101-109

³ Richard B. Sher, ‘Commerce, religion, and the enlightenment in eighteenth century Glasgow’, in, T. M. Devine and G. Jackson, eds., *Glasgow Vol I: Beginning to 1830* (Manchester, 1995), pp. 335-336

⁴ Richard Duncan, ‘Notices regarding the History of Printing in Glasgow’, in, *Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow*, ed., Richard Duncan, Maitland Club (Glasgow, 1831), p. 16

⁵ There are no minutes from 10th January 1752 to May 1764, from 22nd November 1771 to January 1773, 11 February 1773 to May 1776, from May 1779 to April/May 1794. Those that do survive are kept in Glasgow University. ‘Laws of the Literary Society in Glasgow College’, Glasgow University Library, MS Murray 505

myriad of investigations across a diverse range of scholarly interests. An example of this can be found by assessing the wide variety of papers that the Foulis brothers read before the society. Robert Foulis gave papers entitled, 'Memoir on the Discovery and Culture of Genius' (1764), 'From what reasons founded in nature do the Imitative Arts of Music, Painting, and Poetry proceed' (1767), 'Whether Learning, Arts, Sciences, and Manners in Europe are upon the whole on the Advance or Decline' (1769), as well as on non literary subjects such as, 'Observations on the Knowledge or Science necessary to a Commercial Town or State' (1766), and, 'On the improvement of Agriculture and at the same time diminishing the expence' (1771). Andrew was just as prolific, and provided papers on 'The Advancement of Learning' (1765), 'A Discourse concerning Literary Property' (1766), and papers on Egyptian papyrus and the Libraries among the ancients.¹

The convivial disposition of the Scottish clubs, along with the new teaching styles of men like Leechman and Hutcheson performed a gradual yet significant enlightening of the previously hard-lined and orthodox Glasgow University system, recognised more for its zeal than its erudition. Despite the criticisms of men such as John Witherspoon, who would himself go on to teach and advance the discipline of literary criticism, that some of the academics had sacrificed the truth of the apostles for the heathen philosophers, the situation at Glasgow had irrevocably changed for the better. Through his investigations into aesthetics, Hutcheson was able to lay the foundation of a philosophical system that would impact upon the whole of Scottish culture, not just in the enlightenment period, but would also continue to resonate into the nineteenth century. Although it was not his main concern he began to lay some basic foundations for the criticism of literature. Using

¹ 'The Literary Society of Glasgow', in, *Notices and Documents Illustrative of the Literary History of Glasgow*, ed., Richard Duncan, The Maitland Club (Glasgow, 1831), pp. 134-135

beauty as his primary focus he investigated how an author used and represented the natural world in order to create quality literature. Such analysis demonstrated that he was moving away from a reliance on Shaftesbury's philosophy and was beginning to construct his own system. Although not as powerful a thinker as Hutcheson, Leechman is a figure who needs to be reintroduced to the canon of Scottish Enlightenment literature. His works on rhetoric are significant on the grounds that some of his ideas anticipate those of Hugh Blair, who is (rightly) a more eminent figure in the field of criticism. However, Leechman's critical analysis of sermons, both in their delivery and in their composition was exactly the same type of appraisal which the literati were beginning to attempt with poetry, drama and novels. One needs to be quite clear that literary criticism, despite its modern connotations and narrow focus on these forms of literature, could, in the eighteenth century, take a much wider scope. In this respect the criticisms of Hutcheson in aesthetics and Leechman on sermons and rhetoric, are just as vital to the emergence of the discipline of literary criticism as the works of its premier figures, Adam Smith and Hugh Blair.

CHAPTER 3: RHETORIC AND CRITICISM IN EDINBURGH

When Hugh Blair set out his critical philosophy in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) he had become acutely aware of the power and effect which belles-lettres had on the general public. In the preface to the first edition he stated: ‘When the Author saw them circulate so currently, as even to be quoted in print, and found himself often threatened with surreptitious publications of them, he judged it to be high time that they should proceed from his own hand’.¹ The subsequent success of the *Lectures* in both Europe and America confirmed Blair’s position as the premier figure in the field of rhetoric and ensured that Edinburgh would become a hotbed of literary criticism. Blair’s biographer Robert Schmitz estimated that the *Lectures* had been reprinted over one hundred and ten times, and went as far as to claim that they had become, ‘a staple of instruction for half the educated English-speaking world’.² Since Schmitz made these statements in the late 1940s, modern criticism has tended to place Blair at the apex of a critical school of thought tracing a line back through Adam Smith and ultimately to the *Spectator* of Addison and Steele.³ While this is certainly one valid line of critical descent it is surprising that Blair’s own Edinburgh environment is frequently omitted as a crucible which forged his critical thought. In particular, Blair’s education at the University of Edinburgh, under John Stevenson, the first man in Britain to offer lectures on belles-lettres, is a factor which is rarely emphasised when identifying his influences. Stevenson’s fellow lecturer Charles Mackie, who was often referred to as Professor of

¹ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (3Vols., Dublin, 1783), I, p. iii

² Robert Morell Schmitz, *Hugh Blair*, (New York, 1948), p. 3

³ For examples of this, see Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, (Edinburgh, 2000), Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*, (Edinburgh, 1998), Lynee Lewis Gaillet, ed., *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (New Jersey, 1998), Thomas P. Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces* (Pittsburgh, 1997)

Belles-Lettres, even though his official title was Professor of Universal History, is another university figure who played a significant role in shaping the critical practices of his students.¹ To these two figures one might also add the professors of moral philosophy who, in the early 1730s, were beginning to incorporate aesthetics and taste into their moral discourses. In this respect they were reacting to the theories of Francis Hutcheson at Glasgow University who was synthesising a system of moral philosophy which placed aesthetics and sense perception at the core of human feeling. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas on Beauty and Virtue* (1725) was also important because it employed literary sources such as the poetry of Homer in order to demonstrate the moral sense in action. One only has to read Blair's chapter on 'Beauty, and other Pleasures of Taste' to understand the power of Hutcheson's thought in his own critical ideology.² However, it is my intention to argue that the ideas of Hutcheson were put into working practice in Edinburgh as early as the 1730s and therefore would have been instrumental in forming a substantial part of Blair's perceptions on Beauty while he was still a student.

In attempting to do this one must be careful not to fall into the trap of intimating that the art of criticism is a hermetically sealed university discipline. To do so would be to neglect the significant contribution of Scotland's clubs which played a critical role in the exchange of ideas and the spread of belletristic criticism not just in Edinburgh, but in all the major Enlightenment centres of Scotland. Therefore I feel it is necessary to analyse the *modus operandi* of the Scottish clubs in the early years of the Scottish

¹ See L. W. Sharp, 'Charles Mackie: The first Professor of History at Edinburgh University', *Scottish Historical Review* (1962), pp. 23-45. Thomas Johnston the Hague Bookseller sent letters addressed to the 'Professor of History and Literature at Edinburgh.' Robert Duncan one of his students addressed him as 'Professor of History and Belles-Lettres' and his friend John Mitchell wrote to say to him that he is, 'exceedingly glad that the Belles-Lettres meet with so good entertainment with you'.

² Blair, *Lectures*, I, pp. 94-113. Blair remarked 'On Beauty only I shall make several observations, both as the subject is curious, and as it tends to improve Taste, and to discover the foundation of several of the graces of description and of poetry'. p. 94. He then alerts the reader to Hutcheson's *Inquiry*.

Enlightenment, and in particular the development of the Easy Club on the grounds that it not only engaged in critical practices, but also possessed one of the most talented Scottish poets of the age in Allan Ramsay. In their quest to identify literary criticism as a uniquely Scottish invention, critics such as Franklin E. Court and Thomas P. Miller have chosen to locate Scotland as a disembodied provincial outpost which was only capable of creating such a discipline because it was reacting to cultural pressure of the imperial centre. Miller is the most explicit of the two in this belief. 'Like the 'North Britons' and colonial Americans who first taught college English', he argues, 'the Dissenters were cultural provincials, outsiders for whom the contemporary idiom was problematic enough to be studied and important enough to be taught'.¹ This sort of criticism constructs a framework on strictly national lines, and uses the universities to reinforce the divisions between Scotland and England by suggesting that this criticism could only have been created in the cultural provinces because they had a greater need to study and learn the language of the dominant culture. In reality the Scots were reacting to their own literature just as much as they were to the imports of the English but they were also happy to use the best European literature to construct their critical machines, employing the works of Shakespeare, Milton and Cervantes in equal measure. Therefore to gain a more balanced view of the development of literary criticism in the early Scottish Enlightenment it is vital to move away from the universities and into the heart of Scottish society to understand how this practice was employed on a social scale.

This nationalistic division implies that Scots and English criticism has no point of contact which is patently absurd. In order to explode this myth, an analysis of the critical practices of Thomas Ruddiman, the Keeper of the Library of Advocates and the foremost

¹ Thomas P. Miller, 'Where did College English Studies Come From?', *Rhetoric Review* 9 (1990), p. 51

grammarian of his day will provide conclusive evidence that criticism in the eighteenth century can easily transcend national borders. Indeed, Ruddiman's entire system for criticising literature offers a fascinating contrast to the belletrism of the later period as it represents the clash of ancient and modern learning, played out in the form of classical and grammatical criticism in opposition to belles-lettres and taste. Therefore his debate with William Benson over the literary merits of George Buchanan and Arthur Johnston was a pivotal moment in shaping the course of British criticism. Furthermore it will shatter the perception that belles-lettres is something which could only have emerged in Scotland as a reaction to English cultural dominance.

The best place to start is with an overview of Scottish clubs. In many respects these were the arteries of the Scottish Enlightenment, circulating the latest thinking and ideas around the country. Unlike today, the eighteenth century clubs were forums where all forms of learning were promoted and encouraged and were places where the literary critic and the scientist could meet together to discuss ideas. As D. D. McElroy has observed,

We have lost much, too, of the intellectual camaraderie which ruled eighteenth century literary societies. No longer does the doctor, the lawyer, the merchant, and the chief meet with the poet, the historian, the philosopher, the political economist, the chemist, and the engineer. Each resorts to his own professional association, contented and comfortable only in the society of men whose interests are as narrow as his own.¹

The fact that literary clubs had such a diverse membership is a crucial factor in providing a solid base for the understanding of belles-lettres. Although it is often rigidly located as the intermediate phase between rhetoric and literary criticism, this oversimplification of its development implies that there is an equally rigid style to which it adhered. However,

¹ Davis D. McElroy, 'A Century of Scottish Clubs 1700-1800' (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1969), I, p. 3

such clubs offered the opportunity for members to comment on scientific and philosophical writings in the same way that modern critics comment on poetry and prose fiction. While such a system would seem completely illogical to the modern critic, Enlightenment society accepted it wholeheartedly.

Clearly though, literary societies did have a strong tie with literary productions of the age, and the Easy Club was no exception. Founded on the 12th May 1712 the original members decided to call one another by the names of Rochester, Isaac Bickerstaff and Tom Brown, later to be joined by Sir Roger L'Estrange, and Sir Isaac Newton. The selection of literary personalities illustrates that right from its inception the club was determined to express itself through a literary vent.¹ Indeed the club was very self-consciously modelled on the ethos of the *Spectator*, and McElroy goes as far as to say that if there had been no *Spectator*, there would have been no Easy Club.² In 1712 they wrote to the magazine to express their gratitude for providing such an impeccable model of excellence:

The 1st thing that induced us to join a Society was ye Readings of your Spectators where it is frequently Recommended and ye better to acquaint Us with fine Thoughts we have Observ'd as one of our fundamentall Laws that one or two of ye Spectators shall be Read at every Meeting That in Case any passage or Sentence occur we have any Scruples or Doubts about everyone may give his thoughts on't And thus (As ye Rubbing two hard bodies together will smooth Both) we have all been Satisfied about ye thing each of us of our Selves could not be Convinced of Consider Sir We are but young and have Need of Advice and Seeing you are the fittest person can do it We earnestly beg you'l lay down ye best methods and Rules to be observ'd in a Society of our Constitution.³

¹ John Fergus, 'The Journal of the Easy Club', in, Alexander M. Kinghorn, & Alexander Law, eds., *The Works of Allan Ramsay* (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1972), V, p. 5

² McElroy, 'Scottish Clubs', I, p. 28

³ John Fergus, 'George Buch[anan] Secretary of the Easy Club, to the Editor of the Spectator', 1712, Aug. 15. (Edinburgh) Laing Collection, II:212. There is however, a problem with attributing the authorship of

On this evidence it is clear that the Easy Club was looking for a set of rules which they could follow in order to enhance their own format of polite learning and the *Spectator* was there to provide this. The critical style of the magazine exerted an influence over a great many Scottish clubs in this period, not just the Easy. Alexander Fraser Tytler writing at the end of the century remarked, ‘the cultivation of style became the object of study; and in a few attempts at that lighter species of essay writing, of which Addison had furnished the model, we see the dawning of a better taste in composition than had hitherto appeared in any publication from the Scottish press’.¹ Tytler’s observations are interesting as he identified Scottish belles-lettres as having English roots.² While I think he is correct in identifying the *Spectator* as a source for the foundation of the club, he missed the point that it evolved from the shadows of its English parent to enshrine its very own conscious Scottish identity. Janet Sorensen has gone as far as to label the Easy Club’s association with the *Spectator* as the ‘fetishization of polite interaction’.³ Despite her analysis, as the writer of the letter to the *Spectator* mentioned, they were a group of

this letter to John Fergus Although the letter was indeed sent on the 15th of August, it had been written on the June 6th 1712, which was before John Fergus, or, George Buchanan as he became known joined the club. He was admitted on the 27th of June 1712. ‘The same 27 of June a New Member was admitted who Chose for his Patron Mr. George Buchannan and after ye ordinary Ceremony of admission and subscribing the Laws with his Patron’s Name was Saluted as a Member’. Fergus, ‘Journal of the Easy Club’, p. 7.

Therefore the letter in the Laing collection while it very probably was transcribed or copied by Fergus was unlikely to have been written by him as an original. Corey Andrews has offered the opinion that it was in fact Ramsay who pens this letter, but there is no evidence to support this view. Corey Andrews, *Literary Nationalism in Eighteenth Century Scottish Club Poetry* (Lampeter, 2004)

¹ Alexander Fraser Tytler, quoted in, McElroy, ‘Scottish Clubs’, I, p. 27

² This is an opinion shared by John Ramsay of Ochertyre who identified the Union as the major catalyst for the development of Scottish letters. ‘The Union of the kingdoms in the year 1707 produced great though not immediate revolutions in the sentiments and tastes of our ingenious country men. Indeed that memorable event hath led to consequences, good and bad, which were not foreseen by its able promoters or opponents... Whether in our deviations from the modes and manners of our forefathers, we have always acted with discretion, may admit of some doubt; but the most zealous admirers of ancient times must confess that to our old rivals [the English] we are in some measure indebted for the great progress which our countrymen have made in the belles-lettres and authorship’. John Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed., William Allardyce (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1888), I, p. 3

³ Janet Sorensen, *The Grammar of Empire in Eighteenth Century British Writing* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 151

young men embarking on a new project. Subsequently, as they began to grow in confidence and experience they started to promote a stronger brand of Scottishness. The most overt example of this is the decision in 1713 to change the pseudonyms of the members from English to Scottish literary figures. The motion was proposed by the only member with a Scottish name – George Buchanan (Fergus). He declared that, ‘he thought it would be an honourable article in the Constitution of a Club of Scots men (who have Resolv’d to be called by other Names than their own) to pay a dutifull Respect to the heroes and Authors of their own Nation by Choosing them for their patrons’.¹ The motion was unanimously passed and as a result Allan Ramsay famously adopted the name of Gawin Douglas, and other Scottish literary figures such as Blind Harry, Sir David Lindsay, Lord Beilhaven and Dr. Archibald Pitcairne became the pseudonyms of the club.²

Undoubtedly the most famous figure in the club was Allan Ramsay. Indeed Ramsay was a figure who not only did much for the revival of vernacular Scots as a viable literary outlet, but through his own literary productions became the subject of critical debate among the next generation of Scottish Club goers.³ On April 14th 1779 the Pantheon Club of Edinburgh debated ‘Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay or

¹ John Fergus, ‘The Journal of the Easy Club’, p. 28

² There is the possibility that the desire to change the patrons’ names from English to Scottish may have been the result of Pitcairne’s death. Pitcairne died on the 20th of October 1713 during which period the Easy Club had not met from April 30th until November the 5th. Indeed after a discussion about why it had taken them so long to convene between these two dates, the first point of business was to discuss the issue of pseudonyms. Pitcairne’s reputation as a poet and playwright, combined with his frequenting of both literary and convivial clubs would have meant he was a figure well known to most of the patrons of the Easy Club. The fact that Pitcairne was ultimately chosen as a patron adds further weight to this argument.

³ Ramsay’s publisher was Thomas Ruddiman, although the arrangement would appear to be purely financial, rather than a mutual exchange of admiration over the love of vernacular poetry. Ramsay did have some complaints to make about his publisher’s work: ‘This edition [*The Gentle Shepherd* (1728)] has too many capitals at the beginning of words and is, in many respects, inelegantly printed’. As will soon become apparent, Ruddiman was not overly concerned with elegance, it was accuracy that was his master. Allan Ramsay, quoted in, Ian S. Ross & S. A. C. Scobie, ‘Patriotic Publishing as a Response to the Union’, in, T. I. Rae, ed., *The Union of 1707: Its Impact on Scotland* (London, 1974), p. 110

Robert Fergusson done more Honour to Scotch Poetry?’ The debate attracted attention from those members who themselves had literary pretensions. The poet, Alexander Wilson and Ebenezer Picken a teacher of language in Edinburgh, and a minor poet, both contributed to the debate which was published in a pamphlet entitled: ‘The Laurel Disputed: or, The Merits of Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson Contrasted: In two Poetical Essays.’ The man ultimately judged to have triumphed in the debate, Robert Cummings, had his contribution published separately under the title: ‘Essay on the Question: Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done more Honour to Scotch Poetry?’ (1791).¹ In fact, out of seven members who took an active role in this debate only one, Wilson, argued the case for Fergusson. While this may show that eighteenth century Scots felt in general that Ramsay had made a greater contribution to Scots literary culture, the wider point to be made here is that Ramsay himself had moved from the position of a figure discussing English literary values, to one discussing Scottish literary values, and, who ultimately became the subject of that very literary debate.

Ramsay was also admitted to the ‘Worthy Club’ along with Duncan Forbes of Culloden and Gilbert Elliot of Minto. More importantly from a literary point of view, he also contributed poetry to the Royal Company of Archers, a group founded in 1676 for the purpose of exercising skills in archery, but which ultimately, as the influence of Jacobitism waned, became more of a literary club, who developed their own style of literature. The poems are also worthwhile noting because Archibald Pitcairne added

¹ McElroy, ‘Scottish Clubs’, I, p. 159

contributions as well.¹ In 1724 Ramsay became their bard, an honour that was later bestowed on none other than Robert Burns in 1792.

The fact that Ramsay was involved with a number of clubs and achieved poetical eminence within them, is not to say, that he escaped critical censure. While the members of the Easy club were busy writing to Addison and Steele on the 6th of June to inform them of how much they admired their critical acumen, on the same day, an anonymous poet was putting his own critical method into practice by composing a savage attack on Ramsay's poetical abilities:

How oft did thy patron forbid
to harm ye ashes of ye Dead
Yet thy Dull Barburnis Elegy
quite strangling Maggies' Memory
a death worse than hers causes dye
Thy muse with ye same Ease does write
as Constipated dogs do shite. (ll. 53-59)²

While it may be a far cry from polite and eloquent composition, as a piece of criticism it most certainly hits its mark. In fact this shows that criticism in this period was already more widespread and diverse than simply a brand of polite learning found in the universities and the magazines of London and Edinburgh. This style was born from the Scottish tradition of flyting, albeit it existed here in a much more vehement form. It is also an example of how criticism was conducted at all levels of Scottish society, and not the sole preserve of literary professors attempting to influence taste through a process of polite anglicisation. This view of criticism was perpetuated by critics such as James

¹ The poems are in a collection entitled: *Poems in English and Latin, on the archers and Royal Company of Archers* by Several Hands (Edinburgh, 1726) A further significant contributor was John Ker, Professor of Greek at King's College.

² Anon, 'To the Honourable Praeses and other Demented Members of ye Easy Club assembled in a Subterannean appartment at Edinburgh', 6th June 1712. The Club of course was not prepared to take such criticism lightly and responded with the equally vehement, 'Right worshipfull Blockhead and Correspondent', 7th June 1712.

DeLancey Fergusson and David Daiches who believed that the critical and poetical tradition in eighteenth-century Scotland became fractured along the lines of pedantic anglicising critic and vernacular poet.¹ The criticism of the anonymous poet helps to explode some of these myths as they clearly demonstrate the blending of high and low culture in a cohesive attack on what they judge to be inferior poetry.

This type of critical attack seemed a regular occurrence for the members of the Easy Club. On 1st July another anonymous critic sent a selection of queries to the club, asking among other things, ‘whether Maggie Johnstouns death or Elegy be ye more Lamentable accident’, and in a reference to the practices of the *Spectator*:

That if the epistle to the *Spectator* be Neglected or meet
with an indiscreet Answer it would not be an honourable
Revenge to Dispatch one of the most Resolute members
to Pistoll him on the Contrair Upon Receipt of a kind of
answer it would not be the highest ingratitude if there
were not a Te Deum Solemnly sung by the whole members.²

As with the poem the club was quick to answer the criticisms of its premier poet with a likewise dry wit. ‘Maggie’s Elegy doubtless gave more occasion of Lamentation than her death because Many that Read it Lamented they were not so happy in their thoughts as to be master of such a performance’.³ Even though he was attacked by outsiders, within the confines of the Easy Club, Ramsay was highly regarded. When on February 2nd 1715 he demanded that he should be given the patent as the Poet Laureate of the Club the other members acquiesced to his request.⁴ McElroy believed that the poems which Ramsay wrote during his time in the Easy Club had a greater importance than mere literary

¹ For examples of this see David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: the eighteenth century experience* (London, 1964) and James DeLancey Fergusson, ‘Burns and Hugh Blair’ *Modern Language Notes* 45 (1930), pp. 440-446

² Fergus, ‘The Journal of the Easy Club’, p. 14

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48 His first duty as a new member was to write a poem on Ease which was duly appended to the ‘Journal of the Easy Club’ by Fergus.

productions. 'In his Easy Club poems, as elsewhere, Ramsay wrote in a new form of literary Scots, an amalgam that was neither pure Scots nor pure English'.¹ While this is an astute observation, as Ramsay could certainly traverse genre, style and register, one should be cautious in accepting too readily the words of McElroy in this instance. Corey Andrews has cogently observed that the format which McElroy used for his own book was restrictive because his categorising of clubs in the 1700 to 1745 period as 'Preparation' meant that clubs in the pre 1750 period could only be held up as imitator clubs that relied on the English for cultural development.² McElroy was quick to dismiss the literary contributions of Fergusson and Burns to their respective clubs: The Cape Club and the Crochallan Fencibles, arguing that neither were capable of matching the efforts which Ramsay put into the poetry of the Easy Club. More alarmingly though, was his dismissal of the poetic talents of Archibald Pitcairne whom he considered to be an inferior poet to Ramsay simply on the grounds that there appears to be a greater body of work left by the younger poet.³ This is despite his acceptance that, 'The earliest example of a club remembered for the sake of its poet, is a 'jacobite club' in which Dr. Archibald Pitcairne took a leading part'.⁴ Of course one should be careful when criticising the literary productions of Pitcairne. For while he was a gifted Latinist and a staunch patron of deserving learned men, of whom Ruddiman was one, his main agenda was not the advancement of Scottish letters for the benefit of the whole country, but rather to confirm his own elitist position within the republic of letters. As Douglas Duncan has observed:

¹ McElroy, 'Scottish Clubs', I, p. 37

² Andrews, *Literary Nationalism*, p. 30

³ McElroy, 'Scottish Clubs', I, p. 255

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 255 Although there appears to be very little known about this club, Sir Walter Scott reported that his grandfather was a member, and that they conversed in Latin. The only person to have addressed this issue of Jacobitism in the club is Murray Pittock, who linked the poetry they produced to its history. Murray Pittock, 'Were the Easy Club Jacobites?', *Scottish Literary Journal* 17 (1990), pp. 91-94

‘His mastery of Latin was not a foretaste of balanced eighteenth-century classicism but a weapon of his humanist elitism which flourished in the face of Presbyterian illiteracy’.¹ This is a cogent reminder that Scottish Literature does not just align itself along national boundaries, but instead takes into account political and religious divisions.

The appreciation for literature among the Presbyterian clergy did begin to shine through in the early eighteenth century. In the figure of the Reverend Robert Wallace one can see a new breed of enlightened Presbyterian clergymen emerging in Scotland. Wallace was not only involved in the defence of the freedom of literary expression when the controversy over John Home’s *Douglas* erupted in 1757, he was also one of the earliest members of one the most important clubs in early eighteenth-century Scotland: the Rankenian Club.² It was specifically set up with the intention of improving the mastery of English of its members, and to perfect their skill in literary forms. By eighteenth century standards the club itself remained intact for a long period, running from 1716 to 1774. Clearly literature was one of the main concerns of the members as they devoted a large portion of their time to demonstrating ‘correctness of taste’ and ‘attention to composition’. Alexander Bower provided an outline of the sort of activities the Rankenians got up to: ‘The gentlemen who composed it spent their hours of meeting in literary conversation, making critical remarks of any new works of merit that were published; or on the style, sentiment, or manner, of authors of established reputation’.³ After Wallace’s death in 1771 the *Scots Magazine* acknowledged its contribution to the development of Scottish letters, while at the same time giving an account of its activities.

¹ Douglas Duncan, ‘Scholarship and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth Century’, in, Andrew Hook, ed., *the History of Scottish Literature Vol. 2 1660-1800* (Aberdeen, 1987), p. 57

² For Wallace’s involvement in the Douglas Controversy see Chapter 6 on Religious Rhetoric.

³ Alexander Bower, *The History of the University of Edinburgh: chiefly compiled from original papers and records, never before published*. (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1817), II, p. 46

Its object was mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational inquiry; its influence, however, was not confined to the individuals of whom it consisted. It is well known that the Rankenians were highly instrumental in disseminating through Scotland, freedom of thought, boldness of disquisition, liberality of sentiment, accuracy of reasoning, correctness of taste, and attention to composition; and that the exalted rank which Scotsmen hold at present in the republic of letters, is greatly owing to the manner and the spirit begun in that society.¹

On first appearance, it may appear to be an exaggerated tribute to a recently departed man of letters, but the fact that some of the most prominent figures in the development of belles-lettres in Scotland attended suggests that the influence of this club was significant. Some of the members of the club included John Stevenson, John Pringle, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, and its Principal William Wishart. Also a member was George Turnbull, regent at Marischal College from 1721-1727, and along with David Fordyce one of the first in Aberdeen to deliver his lectures in English; and in this he was second only to Francis Hutcheson at Glasgow in changing from the long established tradition of lecturing in Latin. Therefore it is not surprising that the club took an interest in the promotion of the English language and rules of composition. No less a figure than Bishop Berkeley was a correspondent with the Rankenians, and he was reputed to have said that no persons understood his system of philosophy better than those who were members of this club. Indeed Berkeley invited some of them to become part of his plan to establish a college in Bermuda, although his invitation was politely declined. George Davie has claimed that the Rankenian club was in fact crucial in bringing Berkeley's ideas to a wider audience in North Britain, and through its university members such as Stevenson, Maclaurin and Turnbull, was instrumental in insinuating it

¹ *Scots Magazine* 33 (1771), pp. 340-341

into the Scottish curriculum.¹ However, Paul Wood has discovered that elements of Berkeley's philosophy were being taught at Aberdeen before Turnbull arrived in 1721 which reduces the impact of the Rankenians in this regard.² The Rankenian club stood in contrast to similar literary clubs established by Thomas Ruddiman in 1718, and a group calling themselves the Associated Critics who were created in 1717. Ruddiman's club appears to have left no minutes and no publications, but its main goal was to promote the classical tradition in Scotland. There is evidence that no less a person than Lord Kames attended meetings, where he enjoyed teasing the club's founder on the classical tradition; and John Ker and William Lauder also appeared to have been members. Lauder was the man who had previously accused Milton of plagiarising his work, but had been rebuffed by Ruddiman himself. John Love a correspondent, and opponent, of Ruddiman's was another potential member.³ The Associated Critics had come together in 1717 to discredit Ruddiman's edition of Buchanan's *Opera Omnia* (1715). The critics involved were James Anderson, Professors Hamilton and Smith of Edinburgh University, Charles Mackie the Professor of Universal History, Sir Robert Stewart, Professor of Natural Philosophy, Reverend George Logan, and Sir Archibald Stewart.⁴ The Associated Critics appeared to have European contacts, most notably in the correspondence between Mackie and Professor Burman of Leyden. Indeed Burman wrote to Mackie to inquire about the

¹ George E. Davie, 'Berkeley's impact on Scottish Philosophers', *Philosophy* 40 (1965), pp. 222-223. For more on the role of Berkeley and the Rankenian club see: M. A. Stewart, 'Berkeley and the Rankenian Club', *Hermathena* 139 (1985), pp. 25-45

² Paul Wood, *The Aberdeen Enlightenment* (Aberdeen, 1993), pp. 38-39.

³ McElroy, 'Scottish Clubs', I, p. 47 Love is interesting on the grounds that he became a master in the High School of Edinburgh in 1735, having previously been a teacher in the high school in Dumbarton where he taught a young Tobias Smollett. Furthermore like William Benson, he became involved in a pamphlet war with Ruddiman over George Buchanan.

⁴ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta, or, Materials for a history of remarkable providences : mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians*, Maitland Club (4 vols., Edinburgh, 1842-1843), II, p. 142 It was when Wodrow joined in 1724 that the list of members was written down for the first time.

proposed work of the Associated Critics. Burman and a Dutch bookseller by the name of Langerak planned to produce their own edition of Buchanan's works. However, the Critics were determined that there would be no such production, as another edition was the last thing that they wanted. They therefore instructed Mackie to dissuade Burman from the project, which he ultimately failed to do, as an edition was published, which ironically used Ruddiman's notes and prefaces as they were. Ultimately Ruddiman's club and the Associated Critics were looking back rather than forward. They were not concerned with belles-lettres or correct standards of taste, but instead grounded their criticism in strict grammatical principles, and argued over the accuracy of translated productions rather than the overall sentiments expressed by the works in question. Even within the world of the clubs one can see the marked change from rhetoric as the art of persuasion and the clubs as a training ground for that style, into one of polite and refined literary criticism where sentiment and taste dominated and rhetoric itself took on a more literary dimension. This forward looking attitude also encapsulates the ideals of another prominent Edinburgh club, the Philosophical Society, founded in 1731, but which went on to become the Royal Society.¹ This club and the Rankenians possessed several ties, not least the number of shared members. John Stevenson, Robert Wallace, Sir John Pringle and Colin Maclaurin belonged to both. There was also heavyweight representation in the form of Sir John Clerk of Penecuik, and his cousin Dr John Clerk, and Lord Kames was also known to attend. Despite what the Philosophical Society would go on to become, and the undoubted recognition of contemporaries of the value of both,

¹ For more on the Philosophical Society see, Roger L. Emerson, 'The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh 1737-1747', *British Journal for the History of Science* 12 (1979), pp. 154-191; Roger L. Emerson, 'The Philosophical Society of Edinburgh 1748-1768', *British Journal for the History of Science* 14 (1981), pp. 133-175

the view tended to be that the Rankenian Club was the more important of the two. An anonymous commentator, writing in *Hogg's Instructor* on the reorientation of Scots from classical models of excellence to English models of excellence in critical practices celebrated at length the English leaning Rankenian club:

Of these two societies [Philosophical and Rankenian], the Rankenian was doubtless the most important. Not that it is meant to deprecate the cultivation of Grecian and Roman literature,... but the cultivation of the English language was of much greater consequence. The probability that it would become the vernacular tongue throughout Scotland -- The state of perfection to which it had been brought, rendering it one of the best instruments of thought and vehicles of communication -- the incomparably rich and ever advancing literature of which it was the depository, rivalling, or surpassing, the most admired productions of Greece and Rome; all these circumstances lent their weight in establishing the importance of cultivating the English Language and English Literature. At one period of our history, our learned countrymen, who carried the passion for the study of classic learning of antiquity to excess preferred the Latin tongue to their own as the medium of communicating their thoughts to the press... But a taste for the acquisition of a classic English style was now beginning to appear; and, though feeble at first, and far from being widely diffused, it was, in the middle of the century, to become a passion similar to that which existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for the requisition of skill in the Latin tongue. It was in the highest degree desirable that this taste should be cherished and invigorated, and to give an impulse in the right decision, was the meritorious object aimed at by the Rankenian Club.¹

This anonymous critic rightly identified the movement from classical instruction to polite English criticism, but makes some rather bold statements about the status of the Scots and their attitudes towards the English language. He lambasted the Scots for speaking Latin in preference to their own tongue, however, he was not referring to Scots, in this case, but English. There is a great irony here on the grounds that English was as alien a language to

¹ *Hogg's Instructor* 8 (1852), p.44

some Scots as Latin would have been. This is a prime example of the narrow mindedness of some Scottish commentators who sought to replace one synthetic language of the Scots with another. Although he was not suggesting that the classical learning taught in Scotland should be altogether discarded, he was adamant that a correct English style should take precedence over it. It is through this anglicising prism that he promoted and endorsed the values of the Rankenian Club as an agent for assimilating Scots to southern norms, and not as a viable organisation reacting to the literary climate of the day.

Nevertheless, not all Scots were as obsessed with employing a proper English style, and Thomas Somerville in particular took issue with the mania of English pronunciation: 'Correct pronunciation and elegant reading have, in Edinburgh, been reckoned indispensable acquirements for people of fashion and for public speakers, and have perhaps come to be overrated, particularly in pulpit oratory, to the neglect of attainments of a more important nature'.¹ In fact the quality of Scottish literary productions during this period appears more vibrant if one is prepared to look at them through the eyes of a European. Carlo Denina, an Italian Professor of Eloquence and Belles-Lettres wrote in 1764 that,

The good writers in our days bear no proportion to those who adorned England thirty years ago. But this deficiency in England is amply compensated, by the many eminent authors who at present make such a distinguished figure in Scotland. The Scotch, as they form but one nation with the English, and write the same language, conceal... from the observation of the neighbouring nation that sensible decline in the genius and literature of England, which would otherwise be conspicuous to all Europe... It is now an incontestable fact, that the principle authors who have adorned British Literature in these latter times, or do honour to it in the present days, have received their birth and education in Scotland.²

¹ Thomas Somerville, *My Own Life and Times: 1741-1814* (Edinburgh, 1861), pp. 56-57

² Carlo Denina, *Scots Magazine* 26(1764), p. 388

The importance of such a statement cannot be stressed enough. Instead of attempting to demonstrate how a weaker cultural partner could best interact with its larger neighbour, here is a European literary critic analysing British literature and concluding that the only reason there appears to be a sustained production of literary genius on the island is purely down to the literary exertions of the Scots. Far from being culturally inferior, Scotland, in this period, is viewed in some quarters, as the dominant partner. It is also significant that this evaluation comes from a man who is involved in the very practice of criticising literature and held a chair in Belles-lettres at a European University.¹

The role of the universities in Scotland also cannot be underestimated, as they were vital engines in the transformation of the Scottish cultural landscape. Peter Jones leaves one in no doubt as to how important a role they played, for he states: ‘This modern republic of letters was not brought to birth easily and if anybody can lay claim to the role of midwife, it must be the Scottish professoriate’.² Jones’s metaphor is a particularly apt one, as all too often the general conception of rhetoric and belles-lettres is that it sprung like a Minerva from the head of Hugh Blair. In fact its birth was the result of a long and patient development which originated in the days before even Blair was a student at the university. With this in mind I now wish to turn my attention to Professor John Stevenson (1695-1775) and Professor Charles Mackie (1688-1770). Both of these figures were instrumental in the development of rhetoric and belles-lettres at Edinburgh, yet both have suffered the ignominy of being relegated to the role of mere sideshows. As for Mackie

¹ The London *Critical Review* eventually came to the same conclusion in 1795 when they said that, ‘the Scottish professoriate were calculated to rescue the literature and science of Britain from the contempt into which they must otherwise fall’. Quoted in, McElroy, ‘Scottish Clubs’, I, p. 123

² Peter Jones, ‘The Scottish Professoriate and Polite Academy, 1720-1746’, in, Istvan Hont & Michael Ignatieff, eds., *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of the Political Economy of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 91

there appears to be no reason why this should be the case. Although he left no published material, with the possible exception of *Antiquitatum Romanorum brevis descriptio* (c. 1740s)¹ there is an abundance of his written lecture notes in Latin and English, as well as a large selection of written correspondence available in Edinburgh University Library. Piecing together Stevenson's contribution is far harder as there is very little written material left by him. The only significant primary material which survives is a collection of essays left by his students between 1737 and 1750. However, one can make certain positive statements about Stevenson.

He was appointed to the chair of Logic and Metaphysics in 1730, when the then professor, Colin Drummond, moved to the Greek Chair. Indeed there appeared to be some friction between these two in the 1730s when Drummond complained that Stevenson had invaded the rights of the Greek chair by attempting to teach in his belles-lettres hour Aristotle's *Ars Poetica* and Longinus's *On the Sublime*. His argument was that as students could not be expected to understand the original Greek he had transgressed the boundaries of his chair. Stevenson, by all accounts not one to suffer fools gladly, cuttingly remarked that if students were having problems with the Greek perhaps the best thing to do would be for him to take the chair in order that they learn some.² This perceived slight at the infringement of a professor's domain came back to haunt Stevenson in the 1760s. When Blair became the first Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres at Edinburgh University in 1762, the elder lecturer was perturbed by the developments, as an article in *The Scots Magazine* of 1802, written by Andrew Dalzel shows:

¹ Jeffrey Smitten, 'Charles Mackie (1688–1770)', in, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com

² Sharp, 'Charles Mackie', p. 44

His critical lectures, it must be owned, contributed a large share towards the production of the more polished and refined, but not more useful, academical discourses of the late Dr. Blair: and it was not without reason, that the institution of a separate chair for a Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres was complained of, by the respectable veteran, as an encroachment upon his province.¹

While he may have been put out by this affair, he had previously accepted an invitation to become an honorary member of the Edinburgh Belles Lettres Society, and he was inaugurated on 8th May 1760 – the same day as Hugh Blair was made an honorary member.² This society, mainly composed of students, extended honorary memberships to professors of the university. Although they primarily addressed literary questions, they also debated political and scientific matters.³ Naturally, belles-lettres did form a significant part of the society's activities, and the role of the two professors in its creation and success should not be underestimated.⁴ Stevenson and Blair would most likely have taught those students who attended the society at some stage in their careers. We know that Stevenson's classes were fairly well attended, for he was also a reasonably well paid lecturer who earned around one hundred and fifty pounds a year.⁵ More to the point he was also remembered with fondness by those whom he taught, in particular Blair and John Witherspoon, who would become the premier figures in belles-lettres in Britain and

¹ 'Account of the Late Duke Gordon, M. A.' *The Scots Magazine* 64 (1802), p. 82

² McElroy, 'Scottish Clubs', I, p. 183. The Belles Lettres Society contained a number of significant members, including, Robert Dick, Professor of Civil Law at Edinburgh, William Robertson, David Hume, Reverend James Fordyce (brother of Aberdeen professor David), Adam Ferguson, John Home, William Cullen, Alexander Stevenson (Stevenson's student, whose Essay for his class still survives), Henry Dundas, and John Pringle. *Roll of the Members of the Belles Lettres Society* (Edinburgh, 1761)

³ Among the literary debates which took place in the early years of the club were, 'What are the Causes of the Decline of Eloquence in modern times and what are the proper means to restore it?' (1759); 'Whether the Stage in its present state is of Advantage or disadvantage to society?' (1759); 'Whether the Critics have done most service or prejudice to Learning?' (1759). For a list of questions proposed to the Belles Lettres Society on literary matters see: 'Proceedings of the Belles Lettres Society', NLS Adv. MS 23.3.4, NLS Adv. MS 5.1.6

⁴ Paul Bator, 'The University of Edinburgh Belles Lettres Society (1759-64) and the Rhetoric of the Novel', *Rhetoric Review* 14 (1996), pp. 280-298

⁵ J. Y. T. Greig, ed., *The Letters of David Hume* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1932), I, p. 280

America.¹ Bower believed that no professor at Edinburgh University ever, ‘had the honour of training up so many young men to a love of letters, who afterwards made a distinguished figure in the literary world, as Stevenson.’² Alexander Carlyle similarly recollected him with great warmth in his autobiography, but he also gave us a glimpse of the sort of material which he taught:

I went to the Logic class [1736], taught by Mr John Stevenson, who, though he had no pretensions to superiority in point of learning and genius, yet was one of the most popular of all the Professors on account of his civility and even kindness to his students, and at the same time the most useful; for being a man of sense and industry, he had made a judicious selection from the French and English critics, which he gave at the morning hour of eight, when he read with us Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Longinus *On the Sublime*. At eleven he read Heineccius’ *Logic*, and an abridgement of Locke’s *Essay*; and in the afternoon at two – for such were the hours of attendance in those times – he read to us a compendious history of the ancient philosophers, and an account of their tenets. On all these branches we were carefully examined at least three times a-week. Whether or not it was owing to the time of life at which we entered this class, being all about fifteen years of age or upwards, when the mind begins to open, or to the excellence of the lectures and the nature of some of the subjects, we could not then say, but all of us received the same impression – viz., that of our minds were more enlarged, and that we received greater benefit from that class than from any other. With a due regard to the merit of the Professor, I must ascribe this impression chiefly to the natural effect which the subject of criticism and of rational logic has upon opening the mind.³

The effect of Stevenson’s class on Carlyle was obviously profound, and it is significant that he should place such a high regard on the ability of his professor to develop their minds through the art of criticism. According to Carlyle, Stevenson also treated his

¹ See Schmitz, *Hugh Blair and Varnum Lansing Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography* (2 vols., New Jersey, 1925)

² Bower, *History of the University of Edinburgh*, II, p. 280

³ Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle* (Edinburgh, 1861), pp. 42-43

students with civility and respect just at the time when their minds were ripening for science and belles-lettres, helping them to discover their own appreciation of taste and to ripen their understanding of the sublime.¹ Considering the calibre of staff at the university it is no mean compliment to him that Carlyle believed these classes were the most beneficial to him during his time at Edinburgh. One can also see the germ of belles-lettres forming in the lectures which he gave, and Carlyle acknowledges as much citing the fact that Stevenson used the best modern literature from France and England combined with the more traditional classical authors. This mixture of ancient and modern is something which is clear to behold in the works of his protégé Hugh Blair.² Clearly Stevenson took advantage of the existing classical framework on which to graft a modern system of criticism that could be of service to gentlemen seeking the benefits of polite learning in the eighteenth century. Peter Jones goes as far as to claim that Stevenson was part of the same movement as Hutcheson and Turnbull in that he began to deliver his lectures in English instead of the more common universal language of Latin.³ If this was true it would only serve to reinforce the point that he was forging ahead with modern forms of learning, providing his students with practical tools which they could use in the wider world. Like Carlyle, Thomas Somerville attended Stevenson's class and greatly valued what he had been taught there. He remembered that Stevenson,

Occasionally read lectures on the cardinal points of criticism suggested by the text-books... his lectures included some judicious philological discussions, as well as many excellent examples and useful practical rules of composition. I derived

¹ Alexander Carlyle, 'Recollections', NLS MS 3463 fol. 57

² On the ancients and the moderns Blair remarked, 'Among moderns, sometimes more art and correctness, but feebler exertions of genius. Among the ancients we find higher conceptions, greater simplicity, more original fancy. But though this be the general mark of distinction between the ancients and the moderns, yet, like all general observations, it must be understood with some exceptions; for, in point of poetical fire and original genius Milton and Shakespeare are inferior to no poets of any age'. Blair, *Lectures*, II, p. 450.

³ Jones, 'Scottish Professoriate', p. 91

more substantial benefit from these exercises and lectures than from all the public classes which I attended at the University.¹

While one may not be able to say with certainty a great deal about Stevenson, it would be fair to say that his own students remembered him as a gifted teacher who left a very favourable impression on them. Here again, a former student is praising the practical benefits which his lectures had on him, and although his statement is shorter than Carlyle's there are several overlaps in what they are saying, as well as areas of agreement.

The critical reception of Stevenson has been fairly divided. While Robert Crawford has labelled him the 'herald of a new subject'² Franklin Court has sought to play down the influence of Stevenson in order to claim Adam Smith as the first professor of English literature.³ Taking the middle ground, Christopher Berry has acknowledged the role which Stevenson had to play in the formation of literary criticism as a university subject, but argues that it was brought to fruition by the exertions of Adam Smith, who capitalized on the need for a thorough treatment in the English language, first through his public lectures on language and rhetoric in the winter of 1748 in Edinburgh, and then through his course at the University of Glasgow.⁴ My own opinion of Stevenson is that he should be seen as a predecessor to Adam Smith, and not relegated to the shadows so that a bigger name in the Enlightenment can lay claim to founding another discipline. If nothing else his role in formulating the critical ideologies of Witherspoon and Blair, two

¹ Somerville, *My Own Life*, p. 13

² Crawford, *Devolving*, p. 27

³ Franklin E. Court, *Institutionalizing English Literature: The Cultural Politics of Literary Study, 1750-1900* (Stanford, 1992), p. 18; Franklin E. Court, 'Adam Smith and the Teaching of English Literature', *History of Education Quarterly* 25 (1985), pp. 325-340

⁴ Christopher J. Berry, *Social Theory of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 109; Christopher J. Berry, 'Adam Smith's Considerations on Language', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 35 (1974), pp. 130-138

giants of eighteenth century literary criticism, and the favourable impression he left on his students should ensure his position as a crucial figure in the discipline's early development.

One source which I have not seen quoted in any of the secondary material on Stevenson is a small manuscript contained in the Special Collections department of Glasgow University entitled, 'Memorabilia apud Johanem Stevenson Logicae Professorem' (1771). Although there are only a few pages, there is his trademark mixture of modern and ancient literature in the service of modern learning. One can also see that he was reacting to the critical style of Charles Rollin, one of the first men to initiate the transformation of rhetoric into belles-lettres. Rollin was made the *Professeur d'éloquence au Collège Royal* in 1688. His four volume work *De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles lettres* (1726-1728) ¹ had been translated into English in 1734, and Stevenson left his own copy to the University after his death. The motto for Stevenson's manuscript is *felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*. While there is a desire to know the causes of things, he is more concerned with how one should retain such vast amounts of knowledge once they have been learnt. Again this demonstrates the practical usage which Stevenson wished his endeavours to have. Of memory he remarks, 'M. Rollin Professor of belles lettres in the university of Paris commends very much young people employing themselves in getting by heart passages of Homer and Virgil, - he says he hath known boys who would repeat Homer from beginning to end'.² He then goes on to say,

¹ For the translation see, Charles Rollin, *The Method of teaching and studying the belles letters... With reflections on taste; and instructions with regard to the eloquence of the pulpit, the bar and the stage*. (4 vols., London, 1734)

² John Stevenson, 'Memorabilia apud Johanem Stevenson Logicae Professorem', GUL MS 310, no pagination

There is another degree of memory which is called the artificial memory as this in his treatise of Belles Lettres is called the natural – as to the artificial – in repeating, for example a passage of Homer, one by the assistance of his ear makes out what the memory knows nothing of, the ear helps to arrange the words when the memory sleeps, even in prose it may have the same effect.¹

The desire to use literature for the advancement of the individual is more often than not seen by critics as the sole preserve of Smith and Blair, particularly in Smith's case because it naturally allies itself to his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) which is often viewed a source for character based criticism in modern English Literature departments. However, this short passage of Stevenson's demonstrates that he too merits a position between these two figures, with regard to the tangible benefits of studying literature.

The only other written evidence of Stevenson's lectures is in a collection of lecture notes collected by John Campbell a student at Edinburgh University. The notes are only six pages long, and do not deal specifically with belles-lettres, but they do offer a glimpse of the sort of figures he was introducing to his Logic class. One can see just how much Stevenson was interested in attaining the truth in all branches of learning, and this search for truth is a critical feature which occurs in all of the literary figures of this period, such as Thomas Blackwell, George Turnbull, Francis Hutcheson, William Leechman and Charles Mackie among many others. As he previously divided memory into natural and artificial, so he divided mental powers with regard to truth saying, 'Truth which is discovered by your mental powers, is either certain or probable'.² He followed

¹ *Ibid.*, Also contained in this paper is a short discussion of the ancient merits of Homer and the modern Translation of Pope's *Iliad*. However, this is not a literary comparison, but rather a debate about the respective merits of the ancients and moderns, where he attacks 'the foolish regard many men pay to antiquity' which Stevenson calls 'ridiculous'. If ever there was proof needed as to whether Stevenson himself was an ancient or a modern, this is it.

² John Campbell, 'Notes from Lectures on Logic, given by Mr. John Stevenson Professor of Logic in the University of Edinburgh', in, 'Observations on Logic by Several Professors', EUL MS. DK. 3. 2., fol. 212

this up by stating that nothing which does not permit of mathematical demonstration can be certain. Ultimately he believed that Logic was known as instrumental philosophy on the grounds that it helped the philosopher to find out the truth, as much as an instrument does the artist.¹

By far the largest amount of primary material which is related to Stevenson is the collection of essays written by his students. Certainly one should be very careful in attempting to discern his ideology on rhetoric and belles-lettres simply through the writings of his students. On one hand very few professors would probably wish to be judged in this manner, and on the other to take the students' statements at face value could potentially distort the few concrete assertions that one can make about Stevenson. However, I believe that if used judiciously the lectures can yield an interesting insight into his teachings. Thomas P. Miller dismissed them a little too easily in his assessment of Stevenson, arguing,

It is precisely the nuances of the essay that contain its critical potential, but these students' essays are as lacking in irony and critical self-awareness as the popular anthologies and elocutionary manuals that taught such students to read essays of taste and manners to learn how to speak with the voice of the *Spectator* or *Idler*.²

It appears from the way which Miller deals with the essays that he is not quite sure what to do with them, therefore the easiest course of action is to dismiss them as largely an irrelevancy in dealing with Stevenson. In his introduction to Adam Smith's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, John M. Lothian demonstrates a more subtle appreciation for the essays, while at the same time recognising the debt owed to Stevenson in the development of belles-lettres. In particular, Lothian pays close attention to the type of

¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 213

² Miller, *College English*, p. 167

literature that his students produced, and acknowledges that similar themes appear in essays across a varied time period.¹ Therefore, even dealing with the facts alone is enough to shed some light on his development of belles-lettres. The fact that the essays so obviously lean on the critical writings of the *Spectator* demonstrates that Stevenson's teaching methods took into account the style of Addison and Steele. We know from the writings of Somerville and Carlyle that he used the *Spectator* as a model in his lectures so one may assume that this was a style which he encouraged his students to emulate. Among the thirty-seven essays still remaining are two essays on beauty, '*de pulchro*' and '*περί τουκαλίου sive de pulchro*', two essays on Taste, two essays on ancient comedy and individual essays '*de educatione*', 'Rules of Conversation', 'Of the nature and origins of poetry', and for students of William Robertson, a fascinating early essay on history entitled: '*de probilitate historica, sive evidentia morali*'.² Robertson is another figure who spoke warmly of Stevenson and found his lectures to be beneficial.³ Simply by observing the titles one can begin to understand the scope of Stevenson's teaching ranging from the mathematical to the literary, and frequently concerned with sentiment, taste and refinement; many of the cornerstones which would form the basis for Blair's own lectures. I would also contend that there are several passages in a number of the papers which are so similar, that they could only have come from the lectures of Stevenson rather than as the direct result of the students' engagement. Of course there is the potential for plagiarism here, however, the fact that some of the essays which share the same titles are spread out across a number of years reduces the potential of this occurrence. In particular, a comparison between Robert Clerk's 'On the Nature and

¹ John M. Lothian, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. xxv-xxix

² 'A Collection of Essays by the students of John Stevenson', EU MSS DC.4 54, fol. 1

³ Somerville, *My Own Life and Times*, p. 14

Origin of Poetry' (1740) with Alexander Stevenson's 'Of Antient Comedy' (1742)

reveals a great deal about the critical thinking of John Stevenson. On the development of poetry Clerk writes:

But poetry was soon divided into different species according to the different inclinations of the poets, for those who had the most sublime genius, sang the actions of great men, and those who had a meaner genius, made the adventures of the worst men the subject of their songs, of whom they made provoking railleries, as they first made panegyricks and hymns. It was Homer that first brought Heroick poetry to its greatest perfection, who turning his thoughts towards the great beauty of composition, the unity of design, the truth of characters, and the just imitation of nature in each particular, has made his words deservedly the admiration of all ages. It is to him we owe Tragedy, for he gave the first sketches of it, making his poetry mostly after the drammatick manner. He likewise gave the first sketches of comedy, by converting into pleasantry the biting reproaches of former poets. And his Margites (as Aristotle observes) has the same relation to comedy, as his Iliad and Odyssees have to Tragedy.¹

Compare this passage with what Alexander Stevenson has to say on ancient comedy, and it is evident that there are more than a number of coincidences between the two essays:

Those of a sublime genius, in hymns and encomiums, celebrated the Deity, and sung the actions of great men; while those of a meaner sort, with irritating raillery exposed the follies and adventures of inferior life. Homer no doubt, deserves the first place in the Epick, and Tragick kind; and perhaps too gave the first rude sketches of Comedy, by converting to Pleasantry, the biting invectives of the former poets. His Margites a concealed sort of raillery intermix'd with the sublime, had the same near relation to comedy, as the Iliad and Odyssey have to Tragedy.²

One may infer that to a large extent these two passages represent Stevenson's ideas on the development of poetry among the ancients. The fact that the two passages are not

¹ Robert Clerk, 'On the Nature and Origin of Poetry' (1740), in, 'Collection of Essays', fols. 140-141.

² Alexander Stevenson, 'Of Antient Comedy' (1742), in, 'Collection of Essays', fol. 176

only similar, but at times match word for word what the other is saying leads me to believe that they would have been copied notes from lectures which Stevenson would have delivered. Clerk's observations on the beauty of composition and the unity of nature are also very similar to the ideas of Francis Hutcheson in the *Inquiry*. It would be improper to suggest that these ideas represent the thinking of Stevenson, particularly as they are absent in the discussion of ancient comedy, but they do indicate that the influence of the Glasgow Moral Philosophy Professor was beginning to have an impact on the Edinburgh curriculum, regardless of whether Stevenson was lecturing on Hutcheson's ideas. The adoption of the Hutchesonian ideal of unity amidst variety can be detected in John Gibson's essay περί τουκαλίου - *sive de pulchro*: '*enim opera naturae consideremus, summam pulchritudinem – ubique inveniemus summum ordinem in magna illa varietate, et admirabilem varietatem... nostras oculos convertamus*'.¹ The assignation of the highest form of beauty to that which has order amidst a great variety is something which could only have come from Hutcheson at this stage. If one was in any doubt that this is the case Gibson reiterates his point with even more force than before:

*Ut pulchritudinem generalem et omnibus natura[e] operibus immixtam contemplemur, quo magis opus est, quam ut oculos nostros in ea operas convertamus. Enim summa pulchritudine ubique, cernitur, orta ex varietate et uniformitate illa in omni creatione obscuranda et haec sunt quae objecta pulchra reddunt nempe uniformitas et varietas.*²

¹ Johannes Gibsones, 'περί τουκαλίου - *sive de pulchro*', in, 'Collection of Essays', fol. 10 (For let us consider the works of nature, the highest beauty – and where we come across that order in that great variety, we turn our eyes, and our true admiration).

² *Ibid.*, fol. 13 (In this way let us consider general beauty and all the works of nature, by which the work is, but (it is) to these works that we turn our eyes. For high beauty is to be perceived where emanating from that variety and uniformity in all creation which previously was obscured, and clearly uniformity and variety restore these beautiful objects). He finally concludes that while there is uniformity amidst variety, nature does not necessarily give an equal portion to all things, nor are they given the same degree of beauty: '*Non solum autem natura non omnibus aequalem portionem tribuit, sed varios etiam gradus pulchritudinis constituit et in aliis minor quantitas apparet*'. fol. 14. (Not only does nature not bestow an

Gibson is also keen to demonstrate that beauty exists in many diverse forms, and that within that, men have many diverse opinions about beauty. This is expanded upon by Thomas Young, in ‘A Dissertation on Taste’ (1742) who writes:

There is one thing I must further add to wit that some distinguish betwixt an accurate and good taste some with the first may say, *video meliora proboque, deleriores sequor*. But in the first place this distinction can never take place in Poetry, Painting, Musick, or the other plastic arts; because as they are only imitations of Nature, he who can distinguish the beautys of the physical world accurately, can likewise know if the artist has made a just imitation of them.¹

The judgment of the world through aesthetic qualities demonstrates that the Edinburgh students at this time were reacting to the Enlightenment unfolding around them in Scotland. Indeed, as Miller himself has noted, by way of recourse to the essays, some of the students were putting down ideas on paper that would not be printed until after the 1750s.² For example in David Clerk’s essay ‘Taste’ (1740) he argues that taste is a natural faculty founded on ‘plain common Sense’ that is in sympathy with the natural order.³ Therefore before the lectures of Smith and Blair, students such as Clerk had learned that taste is not confined to matters of literature or language, but is to be found in

equal portion to all things, but it also consists of varying degrees of beauty and the quantity as more in some things and less in others). He finally goes on to give paintings and music as examples of how to complete this search for beauty.

¹ Thomas Young, ‘A Dissertation on Taste’ (1742), in, ‘Collection of Essays’, fol. 174. Young seems to be demonstrating his own abilities to merge literature with criticism in order to reinforce his argument, while at the same time demonstrating that what one person prefers is not the same as what another person does, even if that selection appears illogical to the outside observer. Young is quoting Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 7:21, but there is an earlier literary example from Euripides’ *Hippolytus* which effectively makes the same point: ‘τὰ χρήστ’ ἐπιστάμεσθα καὶ γινώσκομεν, // οὐκ ἐκπονούμεν’ ll. 380-381 ‘We learn and we know useful things, but we do not apply ourselves to them.’

² Miller, *College English*, pp. 166-167

³ David Clerk, ‘Taste’ (1740), in, ‘Collection of Essays’, fols. 121-132

the 'circle of civility' and good manners. The essays also concerned themselves with the civic sphere, for they frequently drew on the rhetorics of Cicero and Quintilian.

Significantly they did not employ them for their expertise on technical rhetoric, but instead used them to bolster their ideas on the purpose of education. That purpose was to form virtuous, active citizens who would reject luxury for the benefit of themselves as individuals, and the state as a whole.¹

Stevenson himself perhaps deserves the last word on this. As a close confidant of Charles Mackie, one of the few items that he wrote which is still available to us now, is a letter dated 4th August 1733 where he alluded to the Oxford system of conferring doctorates. Having savaged the system for being utterly ridiculous² he proceeded to make a little literary allusion using one of the greatest of the moderns, Jonathan Swift: 'The forms and ceremonies they have there appear indeed to be too numerous, but I am afraid we act the part of Jack in the Tale of the Tub who, to be free of the fringes, tore all the coat'.³

Professor Mackie had less direct impact in the creation of a Scottish form of belles-lettres than Stevenson, however, as I mentioned previously he was often referred to by his students and friends as being the Professor of Belles-lettres. L. W. Sharp saw in Mackie's chair the roots of not only history, but of a number of future chairs created at

¹ Arthur E. Walzer, 'Blair's Ideal Orator: Civic Rhetoric and Christian Politeness in Lectures 25-34', *Rhetorica* 25 (2007), pp. 269-295

² Of the incident he stated: 'I was at Oxford, where the most ridiculous farces were acted with the greatest solemnity you could imagine. What can be more comical than for thirty or forty gentlemen, candidates for the degree of Doctor, to walk for three days together in jackboots, and when the degree is conferred, a reverend old man in lawn sleeves makes a solemn speech to them first upon their gown, than upon their hood; and their boots too must not pass without receiving a compliment; and to conclude the farce he vouchsafes everyone of them a kiss; and, what was most surprising, this was acted before a numerous audience, and not one so much as smiled.' John Stevenson, to Professor Charles Mackie 1733, Aug. 4 London, EUL MSS Laing Collection II.90

³ *Ibid.*,

the university.¹ 'It would seem that not only the chair of Constitutional Law and the chair of History but also the chair of Scottish History and the readership in Ancient History all derive from Mackie's chair, and perhaps that of Rhetoric and the Belles Lettres too'.² While his lectures were never published they survive to a great extent in Edinburgh University Library. The actual course that he taught appeared in the *Scots Magazine* (1741) and it drew attention to the methods which Mackie employed in seeking out historical truth. 'During the whole course of these lectures, he adduces the authority of the best Historians, pointing out the particular passages in their writings; and, upon all great events'.³ Mackie's historical investigations ran along lines very similar to belles-lettres as he investigated the composition of the author's writings in order to detect whether they were speaking the truth, or to uncover any 'vulgar errors in history' as he called them. Mackie's beacon for historical truth was undoubtedly Terentius Varro, who divided history into three periods; the obscure, the fabulous, and the historical. The influence of Varro is so great that one can see just from reading a few passages of Mackie how much it had shaped his views on the forms of literature suitable for use as historical sources. In particular Mackie railed against the use of fable as a potential for a historical source. This comes firmly under Varro's designation of the fabulous, as there is no historical fact evident, only hearsay and speculation. Mackie observed that, 'he who advances such a weak position and believes it, may swallow down anything for truth, and

¹ Bruce Lenman has argued that Mackie's chair was the first in Scotland to have a stress on 'Melvillian historical method', which marked it as distinct from the universalism and studied neglect which existed in the previously established History Chairs in the Scottish Universities up to that date. Bruce P. Lenman, 'The Teaching of Scottish History in the Scottish Universities', *Scottish Historical Review* 52 (1973), pp. 165-190

² Sharp, 'Charles Mackie', p. 29

³ 'A short account of the University of Edinburgh, the present Professors in it, and the several parts of Learning taught by them', *Scots Magazine* 3 (1741), pp. 371

can never be at a loss for evidence as to the truth of historical facts'.¹ Truth indeed, was the single most important factor in writing history according to him.

Truth has been justly esteem'd the soul of History, yet in all ages it has been so much corrupted [by the] fables by many writers on the subject, that imagine it may not be an improper enquiry to search into upon the grounds and reasons of upon many vulgar errors which have crept into history.²

Mackie's complete rejection of fable places him in the same category as the emerging literary critic Thomas Blackwell, the Professor of Greek at Marischal College Aberdeen. Blackwell's agenda differed from Mackie's on the grounds that the Edinburgh professor saw them as a barrier to the truth, whereas his counterpart viewed them as an impediment in the construction of a refined mythology. 'Mythology in general, is *Instruction conveyed in a Tale*. A Fable or mere Legend without a Moral, or if you please without a Meaning, can with little Propriety deserve the Name'.³ This potential dilemma between the untruths of fables and their impropriety as far as constructing mythology is concerned, was actually answered in part by Alexander Stevenson in his essay for John Stevenson. He argued that an analysis of passages in writers such as Euripides and Aristophanes would make one believe that the religion of the people, and the poetic mythology were quite different things:

Their ancient fables it would seem, were not the same, with their true divinity; and surely Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, never intended to explode that of the Romans. The Poets were

¹ Charles Mackie, 'Lecture Read to the Philosophical Society, 4th March 1741', in, 'Notes and Lectures' EUL MSS Laing Collection, La. II 37, fol. 96

² *Ibid.*, fol. 92

³ Thomas Blackwell, *Letters Concerning Mythology*, (London, 1748), p. 70. There is a further point of agreement over the ancients' use of religion. Blackwell believed that it was used by the elites to keep the general populace in line, situation whereby those who ran state affairs also ran its religion. Regardless of the rights and wrongs of such activity, Mackie remarked, 'In ancient times, one hardly hears of an incident started by religion'. Mackie, 'Philosophical Society', fol. 101. He even went as far as to say that since the development of singular Gods, there had been much pain and heartache for people in general through wars and massacres because the monotheistic system ran above the state and in the face of other religions.

left to their own chimericall notions of the Gods, as what no way concerned the public worship. Thus they had two sorts of religion, one poetical and another real; one for the theatre, and another for practice; a Mythology for Poetry, and a theology for use.¹

While this assessment would have been unlikely to satisfy either Blackwell or Mackie, if they had ever read it, the critical method which the student adopts would certainly have met with their approval. By using the ancient authors who were writing about the manners of their age, he would have fulfilled one of the criteria of Blackwell's Rationalist Analytic method which sought to find the truth by analysing societies and individuals depending on their manners, religion, language, and history. Equally Mackie's insistence on only using the authors who could be cross-referenced and checked to find out whether they were speaking the truth is adhered to in this case as Euripides and Aristophanes were commentators on their society, and did not resort to fragments of details passed down to them hundreds of years after the event.²

The idea that truth is the soul of history is a feature which reoccurs frequently throughout Mackie's lectures. The phrase he tended to use most was '*inter Historiae leges quas a veteribus accepimus, prima est; ne quid falsi dicere audeat; deinde ne quid vere non audeat*'.³ This seems to sum up Mackie's historical code of honour succinctly. He paid heed to the teachings of the ancients, although as his lectures show, he was only

¹ Stevenson, 'Antient Comedy', fols. 184-185

² Mackie would have been far less impressed with Robert Clerk's ideas on how fables relate to poetry. Clerk felt that poetry and drama had unduly suffered as a result of the follies and vices of wicked men. He argued that, if one was to condemn Drama, 'he must also condemn the use of Fables, which the most holy men have employed and God himself has such a cause to make use of. For the Drama is only a Fable and was invented as a fable, to form the manners by instruction disguised under the allegory of an action. He must also condemn history, for history is much less grave and moral than a Fable in so much as it is particularly, where a fable is more general and universal, and by a consequence more profitable'. Clerk, 'Origin of Poetry', fol. 132.

³ Charles Mackie, 'Lecture written in April.', in, 'Notes and Lectures', fol. 11, and 'Annual Prelection 1721', in, 'Notes and Lectures', fol. 63 And there are several places where this motto is repeated to the same effect. (The first thing we accept among the history books which come from the ancients: neither dare to say what is false, nor what is not true)

prepared to use them when they could bring evidence which would illuminate the truth he sought but were discarded if they failed in that criterion. This attitude to the ancients aligned him with the emergent figures in belles-lettres in this period, and which would become more pronounced in the works of Smith and Blair, who would borrow from ancient learning where it could provide answers, but would jettison it if they felt they were going down the path of slavish adherence. Truth, for everyone concerned here, was the ultimate destination. For Mackie, it was so important that one should not dare to speak falsely if they know the evidence they have to be faulty. Just as important however, was the acceptance that one ought to speak the truth no matter how personally distasteful it may have been. In certain respects Mackie's ideal of what truth represented was akin to John Witherspoon's, although Witherspoon interfaced this with the truths of natural and revealed religion. He felt that history was not only necessary for providing and confirming these truths but also a requisite for giving mankind a plan of Providence, and a vital tool for encouraging men and women to the duties of adoration, thankfulness, trust, and submission to God. Furthermore he shared with Mackie a distaste for fables, and he argued: 'Real facts only are proper for this purpose, and not feigned stories, in the choice and dressing of which, experience teaches us, the great end is, that man may be pleased, and not that God may be glorified'.¹

Mackie's concept of truth did, however, differ from that of René Rapin, who applied the term to the truth of character in the representation of historical investigation. Rapin was concerned that the historian should strive to uncover the motives which govern past actions, and consequently writing, or re-writing, was the primary business of the art. He was keen to draw a clear distinction between the historian who was committed

¹ John Witherspoon, *Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (Glasgow, 1757), p. 49

to the truth, and the poet, who was committed to fiction. Nevertheless Rapin firmly subscribed to the view that history was a branch of literature, and argued that Cicero himself had identified history as the most important branch of oratory. More specifically, Rapin conceived of history as a branch of rhetoric which aspired to eloquence. As a consequence, the best models for emulation were naturally the ancients, and Livy was his model of choice.¹ Rapin was not overly keen on the modern writers of history, however, he did accept the valuable service provided by men such as George Buchanan who he believed had rescued history from the darkness of the medieval period. Although he recognised Buchanan's efforts, he accused him of servile imitation of Livy's style, but drew a stinging rebuke from Thomas Ruddiman who argued that he had admirably imitated not just Livy, but Caesar, Sallust, and Tacitus, and had been no more servile than Virgil, Horace and Livy himself had been.² For Buchanan, along with most of the humanists in general, the task of the historian was to persuade with the flowers of eloquence and the charm of narrative rather than the objective presentation of the facts.³ Unlike Mackie, who valued the truth, at the expense of all else, Rapin sought to blend rhetorical techniques with historical enquiry in order to attain the truth. For Rapin the historical style needed to be elevated and decorous, while at the same time remaining pure and simple. The historian had to uncover and represent the passions of his subjects

¹ Speaking on Livy's attributes as a historian Rapin remarked, 'He had an exquisite Faculty of expressing his Thoughts nobly, an admirable Genius for Eloquence in general, that is, for the purity of Discourse, for a fineness of Speech, for the Dignity of Expression, and a certain elevation of Soul, that made him most fortunate in his Imagination. He was ... choice in his Words, just in the order of his Discourse, great in his Sentiments, noble and proportionate in the Disposition and universal oeconomy of his Design. He was, in short, a Master of all the Rhetorick of History: for History has a peculiar Rhetorick of its own, and this Rhetorick has its Rules ... Perhaps there was never a Historian more engaging by the Talent he had of expressing Nature to the Life'. René Rapin, quoted in, Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (New York, 1991), p. 270

² Duncan, *Ruddiman*, p. 114

³ For more on the role of eloquence in the Renaissance see: Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism: The Union of Eloquence and Wisdom, Petrarch to Valla* (Princeton, 1968)

but be careful not to bore his readers, but more importantly, he must not fail to instruct his reader. To do this the historian had to employ the rhetorical arts of the classics: rhetorical figures, set speeches, portraits and moral reflections. The rhetorical techniques that Rapin advocated for the historian could just as easily be found in poetry, and the truth which he sought through the accurate portrayal of a historical character could also be used as the framework for providing truthful representation of characters in fictitious histories.

Ironically, Mackie viewed the man who is regarded as the father of history, Herodotus, as a writer of fictitious histories. Indeed, his main complaints about Greek historical writings stemmed from his distrust of the style in which they were composed. He lamented that the Greek antiquities were full of poetical fictions, because they had written nothing in prose before the conquest of Asia by Cyrus. He stated that it was not until Cadmus Milesius introduced them to prose that they turned away from poetical histories. In his speech to the Glasgow Literary Society, James Moor actually cited Herodotus's emulation of Homer's style as a factor in his own historical reputation. Moor argued that one of the reasons for his smooth composition was an imitation of Homer's language and poetical style which allowed him to draw many disparate and incongruous strands together, and harmonize them into one beautiful whole. According to Moor, only by following the model of epic poetry was the ancient historian able to produce such an eminent body of work.¹ Mackie did not have a distrust of poetry, of course, but he was sceptical over its ability to remain independently reflective with regard to historical events:

¹ James Moor, *Essays; read to a literary society; at their weekly meetings, within the college, at Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1759), p. 170

All the wise men of Greece were addicted to poetry...
This no doubt, they conceived, added a dignity to the subjects
they treated of. And the Historians would not be behind the
Philosophers or Legislators in this respect. For in those days the
Greeks wrote only in verse. And while they did so, there could
be no other history than such as was mixed with poetical fancies.¹

He noted that poetry had a function to play as a transmitter of ideas from an ancient past into the collective memory of a people, and that this was a vital role in ancient times when the early nations and peoples had not yet discovered letters. His objection was constructed on the grounds that advanced nations did not have the same excuse as primitive societies, and the vulgar errors of history were altogether worse when historians began to think of themselves as poets. For Scots, he noted that two of the worst examples were the treatment of Robert the Bruce and William Wallace. Both of them had histories written in a poetical manner, John Barbour in the case of Bruce, and Blind Harry in the case of Wallace. Mackie lamented, 'Now when Historians turn Poets, it is not to be wonder'd if they assume the priviledge of using poetical licences'.² His displeasure at this type of literary production should not in anyway be misconstrued as an embarrassment over Scotland's literary effusions. It is true that he felt Scotland could do without them, but only because he judged them to be bad histories. The issue for him was not simply that it was a Scottish problem, but a Europe-wide phenomenon which had been particularly rife during the middle-ages. Although he did not own these works, among the literature in Mackie's collection was a variety of ancient and modern authors, both literary and historical. He appears to have had editions of Bayle, Langlet, Burnet, and Le Clerc from the moderns, to sit next to the histories of Tacitus, Horace, Homer, and Ptolemy of the ancients. He also appears to have owned a copy of Shaftesbury's works,

¹ Mackie, 'Philosophical Society', fol. 102

² *Ibid.*, fol. 102

as well as the prose of Jonathan Swift and the poetry of Alexander Pope. In assessing Mackie, one must be careful not to overemphasise his contribution to learning. Although he appeared to be a gifted chronologer and possessed a meticulous eye for detail, as a historian he left no recognisably published work. He seemed to be more at home pointing out the vulgar errors of history rather than attempting to answer them forcibly with his own interpretation of it.

The same accusation could not be laid at the door of Thomas Ruddiman. If anything, Ruddiman went too far in his attempts to disprove the theories of his opponents under the crushing weight of countless examples. Indeed his very style of literary criticism set him apart from the majority of his countrymen. His adherence to strict grammatical principles at the expense of a polite form of belles-lettres has often meant that he is neglected by the investigations of critics into the Scottish contribution to literary criticism. Robert Crawford does not mention him at all in *Devolving English Literature*, and in the collection of essays in his book, *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* there is no mention of his literary talents, only a passing reference to the University of St. Andrews attempts to set up a chair of Eloquence with him as a candidate.¹ One must acknowledge that Ruddiman's critical system is completely at odds with the polite style which his fellow Scottish critics were in the process of constructing. He spoke disparagingly of this new style in his critical essay, *A Vindication of Mr. George Buchanan's Paraphrase of the Book of Psalms* (1741), stating in his introduction that,

Taste, know Sir, is a very arbitrary thing; and it is almost incredible to what Heights Men, otherwise of great Learning, have been carried, in their partial Regards for some Authors,

¹ Robert Crawford, 'Introduction', *Scottish Invention*, pp. 4-5.

to the Disparagement of others, of as great and sometimes greater Excellency than they. But as the Truth of things is always the same, and cannot be in the least altered by the various Opinions the most knowing Men may possibly entertain concerning them; so its is to be wish'd that Men would keep within due Bounds, and not, by their ill-grounded Prepossessions in favour of any Writer, launch out into odious and slighting Comparisons.¹

As Ruddiman conceived of truth as a fixed constant, it was incomprehensible to him that such an arbitrary factor as taste could be allowed to influence the appreciation for quality literature. For him it was grammar that acted as his guiding light to that truth. Therefore the truly great poets and authors were those who produced works which kept closely to grammatical principles. Although this system would ultimately be replaced, Ruddiman's contribution to literary practices merits a closer analysis for a number of reasons.

Primarily, as a contrast to the belles-lettres style becoming so dominant in the country at this time in order to investigate why his system failed while that of the moderate literati became not only the dominant model in Scotland, but the dominant model in the Atlantic world. Secondly, his critical style is closer to that of Samuel Johnson, the most influential English critic of his day. Therefore it is worthwhile analysing the rules of his system to ascertain why they were also a viable model for his English counterpart. And thirdly, from a Scottish perspective the main thrust of Ruddiman's criticism is centred on another Scotsman, George Buchanan. Therefore it is a worthwhile exercise to examine how the Scots viewed their own literature, and the ways in which they criticised it.

Although Ruddiman produced all his critical writings in Edinburgh and lived there for most of his life, his formative years were spent in Aberdeen where he was given a comprehensive humanist education. Such an education fuelled him with the belief that

¹ Thomas Ruddiman, *A Vindication of Mr. George Buchanan's Paraphrase of the Book of Psalms* (Edinburgh, 1741), p. 2

Latin could provide a viable national culture for Scotland, and was deployed by him, not simply as a badge of learning, but as a marker of his national identity. This made him markedly different from his patron Pitcairne who used his Latinity as more of a weapon than a tool. Ruddiman's study of Latin in Aberdeen had two distinct branches. On the one hand he was rigorously instructed in the study of grammar and rhetoric (rhetoric at this time being the art of speaking, rather than its later association with belles-lettres), but also in the practice of verse-composition. This system demonstrates that Ruddiman could be a rigid grammarian while still appreciative of the aesthetic value of poetry, although it should be noted that whenever the two clashed it was adherence to grammar which carried the day. He believed that grammar was the gateway to higher knowledge and of true learning. In this respect he is akin to Mackie, because in literature he sought the truth above all else, and the way to find that truth was through grammatical principles. His outlook not only stretched back to the Renaissance, but was applicable to all ages, as all learned men of the past had submitted themselves to its study.

As a result of his strict Aberdonian upbringing it would have been unlikely that Ruddiman became exposed to the French neoclassical ideals which were beginning to influence the thinking of his contemporaries such as Stevenson and Mackie.¹ All of these endeavours took place oblivious of Ruddiman, and even if he had been exposed to the works of the French critics there is no reason to suggest that they would have had any impact on him. Nevertheless he was aware of them. In *A Vindication* although he disliked it, he acknowledged that there was a new branch of literary criticism in operation, and he specifically referenced Rollin, who in his study of the Belles-lettres addressed the problems of ascertaining the truth of literature while dealing with obscuring impediments

¹ See introduction for the French impact on the development of rhetoric and belles-lettres.

such as fables. On this point, both the humanist critic and the modern man of belles-lettres were in complete agreement.¹ While the next generation of Aberdonian intellectuals such as Blackwell, Fordyce and Turnbull began to adopt a more modern outlook Ruddiman remained true to his humanist principles. His conscious decision to do so made it unsurprising that his critical ideals would eventually clash with those of his countrymen. As Joseph Levine has amply demonstrated, this clash of ancient and modern learning was not unique to Britain, in fact, the clash had arrived relatively late to these shores. Although he hardly mentioned the role of Scotland in the battle of the ancients and moderns some of his general observations on its developments are relevant here; therefore it is worth quoting him at length:

From the very beginning, Renaissance humanism and the revival of antiquity concealed a paradox. On the one hand, the humanists had resurrected the classics for immediate use and set about imitating them for the practical purposes of their own time and place. They valued them especially for their literary merit and soon renewed the techniques and methods of ancient rhetoric. On the other hand, the recovery of the ancient authors seemed to require, in order to make sense of them, the recovery of the whole world in which they lived and worked and wrote. As a result, the Renaissance scholars invented many of the techniques and methods of modern philology. But the two purposes, which had started out in harmony, in the end proved incompatible.²

While Levine is specifically referring to philology, his template is a good explanation for the progress of rhetoric in Scotland. Renaissance scholars, as they invented the techniques of philology did the same thing with rhetoric, as I have illustrated, progressing from Ramus to Rollin. However as the concept of rhetoric became further and further removed from its roots, and the effect in Scotland became most pronounced between the

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, p. 27

² Joseph Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (New York, 1991), p. 2

humanist north east and southern Scotland which was more open to modern European developments, Leyden excepted. Therefore as with philology what started off as the same discipline diverged to such an extent that both systems came into conflict. In the case of rhetoric, however, I would not go as far as to say that the two proved to be incompatible. The main reason for this is that while Ruddiman's criticism also returns to the teachings of humanism, it can accommodate modern conceptions such as taste and aesthetics, which some commentators, including Douglas Duncan, who has written most eruditely on Ruddiman, have either neglected to mention or have failed to note in his works.

In contrast, to Ruddiman's education in the north-east, William Benson as a young man made a continental tour where he visited among other places Hanover and Stockholm. He was a Whig, as opposed to Ruddiman who was a staunch Jacobite and Tory, and was even returned as an MP for Shaftesbury in 1715. For a time he was also an architect who became surveyor of the king's works in 1718 succeeding Christopher Wren, although he only lasted a year. He began to publish his literary criticism in the 1720s with his *Essays* (1724-5) which was an analysis of Virgil's *Georgics*. In *Letters Concerning Poetical Translations* (1739) he professed Virgil to have been a greater poet than Homer, and he also found time to praise the versification of Milton. In 1741 he wrote *A Prefatory Discourse to a New Edition of the Psalms of David Translated into Latin Verse by Arthur Johnston*, where he lauded him as almost an equal of the great Virgil stating:

The learned Reader will be surprized here to find a Writer in *Latin Verse* equal to any of the *Augustan Age*: in many places not inferior to his Master *Virgil*; for besides all his *Figures* and

Ornaments of Eloquence, our Author possessed all *Virgil's Arts of Verse*, and had a *Delicacy of Ear* not inferior to *Virgil* himself.¹

Benson also demonstrated an awareness of the literary styles of the French critics and alluded to Rapin as a figure who had also tried to produce translations of the Psalms in Latin. Indeed he was highly critical of his literary style, stating that it was low and often obscure.² However the main thrust of his literary criticism does not involve a scrupulous investigation into the choice of the words, the diction or the grammatical structure, but rather, a quotation from the texts involved followed by an appeal to the senses via an individual's aesthetical response. For example, he criticises Ovid for not mixing up plural and singular words in his works which if he had done so would have introduced more variety into his works. He praises the first lines of the *Aeneid*: *arma virumque cano* as being typical of Virgil's style as the objects arms and the man represent singular and plural. On the other hand in the *Metamorphoses* in the lines, '*Ante mare et tellus, et (quod tegit omnia) coelum, // Unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe, // quem dixere chaos*',³ Benson's main complaint with the lines are that *mare*, *tellus*, *caelum*, *vultus* and *chaos* are all singular words and that there are no plurals either to provide a balance, or variety. In this case it would seem particularly harsh criticism on the grounds that Ovid is stating that before there was anything else there was only chaos. True, it can be construed as infinite, but here it is personified as an individual, so it was probably a conscious choice on Ovid's part to keep all the nouns singular.

¹ William Benson, *A Prefatory Discourse to a New Edition of the Psalms of David Translated into Latin Verse* (London, 1741), p. 29

² *Ibid.*, pp.23-27

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32

While Ruddiman could take on the persona of a critic he was more renowned as a printer and publisher. In particular he has drawn attention for his edition of Gavin Douglas's *Aeneis* (1710). All too often this association, coupled with fact that he was Allan Ramsay's publisher has led to lazy criticism which places Ruddiman at the forefront of a vernacular revival in Scotland. The 'Glossary' which he compiled is often championed as the prime evidence for this case, but a closer analysis soon reveals that he was operating with a Latinist agenda, and the last thing on his mind was a Scots vernacular revival. An initial sweep of the 'Glossary' yields a promising crop of Scottish literary productions. He alludes to Barbour's *Brus* and Blind Harry's *Wallace*, as well as to the lesser known, *The Cherrie and the Slae*. Incredibly though, he shows no awareness of either Dunbar or Henryson, which for a man editing a book on Douglas is more than a little odd. However, this situation only seems odd to those who are specifically searching for the fruits of the vernacular revival in the 'Glossary'. In reality, what Ruddiman was celebrating was the ability of the Scots to produce quality works of literature from a Latinate model. The celebration for Ruddiman was not that Douglas produced a version of the *Aeneid* in Scots, but that he had a mastery of Latin which enabled him to perform such a feat. Reacting to the work of Alexander Campbell,¹ George Davie thought he had identified a link between the Latinate and vernacular elements of Ruddiman. He believed that there was something in the story of Campbell's that the humanist legacy had a positive outcome on the vernacular revival. Ruddiman was held up as a figure who protected this idea in Scotland through his production of the *Aeneid*. He argued, therefore, that Ruddiman had a genuine desire to prolong the Humanist Renaissance spirit which cherished the patriotic ambition of bringing the vernacular up to the civilised level

¹ Alexander Campbell, *An Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, 1798)

of classical Latin as a literary instrument.¹ Duncan points out however, that he made no attempt to bolster the position of Scots poetry at any stage of his career. ‘Whatever he may have felt, he never risked his status as a scholar by endorsing poetry in Scots. On the other hand, he often professed loyalty to the tradition of Scottish writing in Latin.

Nurtured by the example of North-East poets like Arthur Johnston, and latterly Pitcairne, this brought his learning and his patriotism together’.² It is right that Duncan should talk of Ruddiman’s patriotism while at the same time playing down his interest in Scots. One should not infer from the situation that Ruddiman was somehow embarrassed by his culture or his language. On the contrary, he was intensely proud of his culture, but it was a culture which was firmly rooted in Latinity, and by its very nature used Latin as its language of expression.

His criticism should be assessed in the same way. Its purpose was not to bolster the pride of Scots in their own language by using Scottish examples such as Buchanan and Johnston. The only reason that they received such attention owed purely to the fact that they were among the very best Latin poets of their age. If anything, this should increase the pride among Scots, as instead of having to promote writers of more modest talents in order to construct a fuller canon for polite consumption and critical analysis, there already existed men in the country with European renown. Benson admitted that the north part of Britain had an excellent reputation for writing Latin when he lamented at the sparse examples of quality Latin verse produced in the south.³ In the quest to revitalise Scots as a language in the eighteenth century, we are in danger of forgetting that Latin,

¹ George Elder Davie, *The Democratic Intellect; Scotland and her Universities in the Nineteenth century* (Edinburgh, 1961), p. 212

² Duncan, ‘Scholarship and Politeness’, p. 60

³ Benson, *A Prefatory Discourse*, p. 27

and Gaelic too, for that matter, were languages of Scottish literary endeavour. Ruddiman edited Johnston's *Cantici Solomnis Paraphrasis Poetica* (1709), where he appeared to sense the Renaissance poet's delight in bringing the ancients to a modern audience, but it was his edition of George Buchanan's *Opera Omnia* (1715) which involved him in his first serious literary conflict. The fact that the entire publication was produced in Latin was deliberately calculated to give the Scottish poet the greatest possible exposure on the European market which Ruddiman was keen to exploit. The decision was so calculated that even the notes which were originally in English were translated into Latin.¹ This clearly reinforces the point that Ruddiman's allegiance was to that language and not English, which he appears to have treated in the same way that he treated Scots. It also illustrates that at this stage of the eighteenth century, the universal language was Latin, and in order to reach the widest audience that was the language in which one had to speak and write. This gave him the opportunity to assert his own belief that Buchanan was a modern poet with unrivalled greatness.

In the preface to *Opera Omnia* Ruddiman was keen to express his ideas on imitation. He used it to defend Buchanan against a charge of servile imitation, and he argued that the epigrams of Pitcairne were praised as imitations also.² However, the most significant charge of servile copying which Ruddiman defended was not an attack on Buchanan, but on the English poet John Milton. His friend William Lauder had sent a letter hypothesising that the author of *Paradise Lost* had been guilty of plagiarism of a kind in the composition of his Epic. Ruddiman was firm, but emphatic in his defence:

¹ Douglas Duncan, *Thomas Ruddiman: A Study in Scottish Scholarship in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 67

² *Ibid*, p. 104

[Milton's *Paradise Lost*] is a true Epic Composure wherein all the Rules of that sublime and noblest of all poetic Works are strictly observ'd, the Unity of Persons & Things, that Wonderful Machinery, those beautifull Episodes & Descriptions, with other things not necessary to be here mentioned, in all which Milton has so admirably succeeded (for I love to speak Truth even of an Enemy) that nothing since the Days of Virgil is equal to him.¹

The response is of critical significance in two respects. First, because it demonstrates that Ruddiman was capable of responding aesthetically to a piece of literature, 'Unity of persons and things' and 'those beautifull Episodes and Descriptions' reinforce this point. Second, it proves that he was also able to pass judgement on and appreciate the works of a modern poet whose literary productions were not written in Latin. Of course, one needs to add a caveat, as it would have been unlikely that Ruddiman would have endorsed the work as sublime if Milton did not have a thorough grounding in the classics, and most importantly, a firm grasp of the grammatical rules of composition. He would also have approved of Milton's poetic development, proving himself adept at Pastoral verse, then Elegiacs, before finally considering himself worthy of Epic.

It is worth bearing in mind that while Ruddiman championed both Milton and Buchanan as two of the greatest poets of all time, he found their political ideologies to be both repugnant and abhorrent. He also wrote to Lauder that:

I am convinc'd in my Conscience that they were both wicked men, and that some of their Works have done much Mischief to the World. But at the same time I believe that they were the two greatest Genius's for Poetry that ever appear'd in this Island.²

His stance is reminiscent of the ideals of Charles Mackie, as even though it was personally distasteful for him to admit that they are at the pinnacle of British poetry if he

¹ Thomas Ruddiman to William Lauder, 5th November 1745 NLS MS Acc. 3412, fol.47

² Thomas Ruddiman, quoted in, Duncan, *Thomas Ruddiman*, p. 64

was to judge them on their political beliefs, he was nevertheless prepared to accept the truth, that in his own mind at least, there were none better than them when it came to poetical talent.

This is a more sophisticated brand of criticism than Benson's because he stuck to a firm code of grammatical practice. Benson did have a sort of aesthetical code, but it was located very much in the sense perception and personal response to the poetry. Indeed on several occasions in an attempt to sell the point he quoted directly from the passage in Latin and then proceeded to add an interjection in order to persuade the reader. For example when remarking on Johnston's ability to adapt the sound to the sense he enthused: 'Here it is that our Author shines. Where the Subject is *Lofty*, how *Majestick*, how *Sonorous* is the Verse! Where it is *Melancholy*, how *Broken*, how *Dejected* are the Lines!' ¹ Douglas Duncan has perhaps unfairly labelled Benson as a critic with more money than sense, owing to his ability to consistently publish sub-standard criticism. ² However I think it would be fair to say that while Benson represented an early move from grammatical criticism to belles-lettres, he was not its most sophisticated proponent. It was not until the post 1750 period when men such as Blair, Smith and George Campbell at Aberdeen began to cultivate their own systems that it became a fit export for the Atlantic world. The greatest inheritor of his style of criticism was Samuel Johnson. His essays in the *Rambler* demonstrate the blend of a solid grammatical foundation with the augmentation of refined taste. Johnson, who called Ruddiman 'that excellent man and

¹ Benson, *Prefatory Discourse*, pp. 45-46. He continues his exhortative criticism when discussing the Psalms directly: Psalm xcix. I. '*The Lord reigneth, let the People tremble: he fitteth between the Cherubims, let the Earth be moved. // Regnat, et aligeros coeli Deus inter alumnus // Emicat: aethereo sub pede, terra, treme!* How strangely does the Verse *tremble* at the Conclusion of the Pentameter Line! It quivers like the Dart that struck in the Side of the fatal Horse!' pp. 47-48

² Duncan, *Ruddiman*, p. 116

eminent scholar' would probably have approved of such a comparison. Johnson's appreciation for grammatical correctness was expressed in his own inimitable style when he remarked 'Ruddiman is dead' upon pointing out the faults of Latin which Boswell had submitted as an 'intransigent' to the Faculty of Advocates Library.¹ It is the shared appreciation for grammatical criticism which tied Ruddiman and Johnson together, in the same way that it was the influence of French belles-lettres and the writings of Addison and Steele which bound Benson together with the moderate literati of Scotland. Therefore the battle between these critics did not take place on national grounds over issues of national identity, but rather over the direction which rhetoric should take in the modern period.²

Ruddiman's own talents as a grammarian almost provided him with a university chair at St. Andrews in the 1720s but the venture proved in the end to be fruitless. The driving force behind this endeavour was Dr Charles Stuart who was anxious that a chair of Eloquence be established. He intended that the post should either be filled by his friend Francis Pringle, or the distinguished grammarian Ruddiman. Stuart's letter to the university board showed that he thought him more than capable of filling the role. 'I'll take it upon me to name another [If Pringle was not accepted] who in my opinion would be an ornament to any University in Europe, for I know he is reckoned by very good judges to be one of the best Grammarians now alive, the person I mean is Mr. Rudiment,

¹ Both Johnson and Boswell thought highly of him. Indeed Boswell was even planning to write a life of Thomas Ruddiman around the year 1773 but he never completed his plans.

² For more on Johnson's attitudes to rhetoric see: Glenn J. Broadhead, 'Samuel Johnson and the Rhetoric of Conversation', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 20 (1980), pp. 461-474. One area where Johnson radically differs from Ruddiman is on the issue of truth. For Johnson the whole point of the true idea of the scholar critic is to achieve detachment and humility, which sets him apart from the false critic. When treating poetry, the true critic must be imaginatively and intellectually attuned to the poetry he is criticizing. For more on this delineation see: Donald T. Siebert Jr., 'Johnson's Shakespeare', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 15 (1975), pp. 483-503

keeper of the Advocats' Library'.¹ The name which he gives to Ruddiman is an allusion to his successful publication *Rudiments of the Latin Tongue* (1714) which went on to become something of a standard textbook on the subject. Robert Crawford has some unusual things to say about the potential foundation of this chair. He argues that it largely stemmed from the Scots attempt to engage more fully in English cultural values in response to the Union. While this may well be true, and Stuart himself was educated at Gresham College in England, which had possessed a Chair of Rhetoric long before the 1720s, it is how he attempts to fit Ruddiman into the equation which does not add up.² He depicts the grammarian as a man who, despite his links to older Scottish poets such as Buchanan and Douglas, uses English, and not Scots as his language, although he correctly identifies him as a man who has a passion for correctness.³ This attempt to shoehorn Ruddiman into the anglicising movement of Scotsmen adopting English cultural values is crude, because as has been made clear, his cultural allegiance was not to English, but to Latin and the humanist tradition. And of course, Ruddiman displayed a strong patriotic pride in his nation's literary achievements, although they were achievements which for him had to be accomplished in a Latin medium.

Ruddiman's most sustained critical writing, the *Vindication* offers the most extensive insight into his thoughts on literary criticism. On one hand, the fact that it was written in English could be construed as an indication that he was accepting the cultural dominance of that language over the power and scope of Latin, just as the university

¹ Charles Stuart to Robert Ramsay, 28 November 1720, St. Andrews University Muniments UY 232.2, quoted in, Robert Crawford, 'Introduction', p. 4

² Gresham College, founded by Thomas Gresham in 1597 did not register students, nor confirm degrees, so it was never anything other than the foundation for public lectures. There is a link between John Stevenson and Gresham College, for in 1747 William Wishart, the principal of Edinburgh University wrote a letter of introduction for him to John Ward, the thirteenth professor of rhetoric at the college. William Wishart, BL MSS 6211, fol 161

³ Crawford, 'Introduction' p. 5

professors of this age consciously decided to teach in English as the Latinate style rapidly became eclipsed. However, it is more likely that he wrote it in English on the grounds that he was involved in a critical debate with the English critic Benson, in which he championed the Latin style of Johnston as superior to all other modern Latin poets, including George Buchanan. A closer inspection of the book reveals that Ruddiman had certainly not re-orientated himself to speak with an English voice. The sheer technical detail and the constant reference to the Latin texts coupled with in-depth grammatical analysis of them revolving sometimes on the appropriate choice of individual words in the main body of Buchanan's and Johnston's poetry demonstrate that this type of literary criticism was not designed for the polite gentlemen of letters to indulge themselves in the belletristic arts, but was instead aimed at the learned scholar who possessed a solid grounding in the classics, with a particular emphasis on grammatical rules.

Although Ruddiman was determined to set Benson straight about the errors which he made concerning Buchanan, he was keen to register his pleasure that a Scottish poet had attracted such critical attention from his southern neighbours. 'All this is highly commendable, and deserves the most grateful Acknowledgements not only of all *Scotsmen*, but of all who, amidst the great Decay of that kind of Learning, do still retain a true Taste and Relish of such ingenious Productions'.¹ The battle in which these two critics were engaged was not fought over any nationalistic grounds concerning the quality of Scottish poetry, but rather was the inevitable clash of styles which Levine had identified as inexorable, as the concept of rhetoric evolved from the Renaissance. Here in a nutshell is classical grammatical criticism verses belles-lettres. Benson was concerned to keep central to his investigation the overarching question of who had produced the

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, p. 1

most beautiful poetry. His entire critical response to the poems is judged in aesthetic terms which make a constant play to the reader's taste and sentiment. In contrast Ruddiman was adamant that the correctness of the style was the key element in the reader's appreciation of a literary production and the machinery which would yield the most accurate results was that which was powered by grammatical rules. The great irony here is that the erosion of the classical critical model to which Ruddiman adhered so rigidly, was accelerated by none other than Hutcheson and the aesthetic strain which he identified in the *Inquiry*. It was his preliminary investigations into the subject and his conclusion that aesthetics was inextricably linked with a moral sense which provided the launch-pad for belles-lettres to become the dominant critical model. Ruddiman's machine proved to be too unyielding in the face of the more flexible modern system. Belles-lettres offered men a chance to look into themselves and to ponder the great eighteenth-century issues about the nature of man, which the grammatical style of Ruddiman was simply incapable of performing because it was not designed to accommodate such usage. Davie however detects a definite aesthetical quality to Ruddiman's criticism, which he argues is the case because he was reacting to their literary quality and not to their religious or political values:

The emphasis throughout was put on the question of literary value, and its distinctive peculiarity among learned works was that scholarly citation and erudite argument were here deliberately subordinated to the ultimate purpose of aesthetic judgment, and not – as in the case of 'scientific scholarship' – developed on their own account.¹

I think Davie is right to point to a more subtle critical acumen in Ruddiman's style than that for which he has traditionally been given credit. There are unquestionably aesthetic

¹ Davie, *Democratic Intellect*, p. 224

judgements in the works, which Ruddiman reveals to his readers as early as the second page of the *Vindication*. He assessed the literary merit of Buchanan in the following way:

[I] am satisfied, that, for the Elegancy and Purity of his Diction, the Sweetness and Smoothness of his Verse, in short, all the other Ingredients which are required to the Composition of a great and masterly Poet, he was inferior to none, and superior to most of the Age he lived in.¹

The aesthetic on this evidence was not an alien concept for him, and in some ways for example the ‘purity of his diction’ and the ‘sweetness and smoothness of his verse’ the two systems, far from being mutually exclusive, could actually reinforce and augment one another. It was only when the two proved incompatible that Ruddiman returned to his classical roots in order to secure his points.

In fact, it was the zealous pursuit of every line of inquiry which was the biggest downfall of the entire production. While Benson’s work was a little over one hundred pages, Ruddiman’s response which was a point by point refutation of his adversary’s comments ran to over four hundred pages. He brought in every example he could think of to back up one point, and would often write up to twenty pages in order to prove a single argument. He was incapable of passing briefly over, or omitting what was of secondary importance, but pursued every argument relentlessly to its utmost ramification. As Douglas Duncan eloquently put it, ‘One is left less convinced than exhausted by the end of his conclusions’.² Even to provide one detailed example would be a long and laborious process, however, it is worthwhile to select some individual cases to illustrate the lengths

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, p. 2. This was not just a one off concession made as an initial gambit. He reiterated his beliefs once he reached the heart of his criticism. ‘The excellency of a Poem does not depend upon the Nobleness and Worth of the Subject; but on the Elegancy and Purity of the Diction, the fine Strokes of Wit and Fancy, and other natural and artificial Embellishments with which it is adorned and set off. Thus we have some admirable Pieces of Poetry upon very low and trivial Subjects, and others very dull and insipid upon those that are of the most important and Serious Nature’. p. 11

² Duncan, *Ruddiman*, p. 117

to which Ruddiman was prepared to go in order to secure his point. In the quest for the most accurate poetical representation, he believed that Johnston damaged the truth of his own productions by leaning too heavily on the fables of the ancient writers:

In this it must be confest, that most *Latin* and even other Poets, since the Restoration of Learning in *Europe*, by their frequent reading, and as it were conversing with these excellent *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, have been too much led, even in sacred Poems, to imitate their Manner, and to fall in with the poetical *Fictions*, and *Allusions* to the Customs of those People, with which they had so beautifully embellished their Works.¹

His observations put him on the same critical wavelength as his fellow Aberdonian critic Blackwell, but the greatest resonance is with that of Mackie.² Although they were assessing the corrupting influence of fables through two separate prisms of literature and history, the overall conclusion was the same. Namely, that they detracted from the truth of enlightened investigation by admitting false history and literature which acted as an obscuring agent. Although Ruddiman was a great defender of imitation, it had to be conducted in a way that would enhance the poem and add to its literary merit, and should in no way be a servile copy. Likewise, there had to be strict rules with regard to the type of literature which was suitable for imitation. His desire that the ‘customs of those people’ should not be imitated points to a similarity with Blackwell. In the *Enquiry*, he was concerned with understanding such customs as for him they were valuable markers in the quest to better understand the manners of the times. However, both Blackwell and Ruddiman realised that while this was fine for examining the peoples of ancient times it

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, pp. 26-27.

² There is a further connection between Blackwell and Ruddiman to be drawn. For in the period of Enlightenment which Hume described as the ‘historical age’ it would seem that the only way in which scholarship could further criticism was via an historical approach. Although Ruddiman could not do this Blackwell had already published on this in his *Enquiry*; a work blending both historical and literary critical methods in a new format.

was wholly inappropriate, and dangerously anachronistic to use such a tool as a model in the construction of modern poetry. For the next four pages Ruddiman then proceeded to recount every case he could think of where fable had intruded upon the impact of the literature.¹ While Benson was, I believe, the weaker of the two critics, he at least had a consistent line of enquiry and a central question which governed his criticism; which was: which of the two poems is the more beautiful? Unlike Ruddiman he was far less concerned with faithfulness to the original and even less so with issues of Latinity. Ruddiman on the other hand was obsessed with who wrote the best Latin and more importantly who produced the most accurate translation. This is not to say that Ruddiman produced criticism which left no room for personal enjoyment, but rather that his enjoyment was governed by a love of good Latin, and by a pertinent use of imitation. As a consequence of this, to a certain extent, he falls into the trap of being a pedantic critic. He is far too focused on the use of individual words and phrases, sometimes to the detriment of the overall effect of the poems. Indeed he would have been a target for the criticism of his fellow Scotsman David Mallet who in his poem, 'Of Verbal Criticism: An Epistle to Mr. Pope' (1733) attacked the pedantry of critics who drew their system wholly from books and grammatical rules:

'Tis thine, O POPE, who chuse the better part,
To tell how false, how vain the *Scholiast's* Art,
Which nor to taste, nor genius has pretence,
And if 'tis learning, is not common sense. (ll. 10-14)

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, pp. 29-32. His complaints include of Johnston's recourse to fables include: 'xlix. 17 *Dives as infernas pompa sequetur aquas*. An allusion to the poetical Fictions concerning the Rivers in Hell, Cocytus, Acheron, and Phlegeton: Which the Psalmist is not supposed to have any notion of'. P. 29, and, 'lxxi. 3 *palma redimata capillos Pax aderit*. Where hair adorned with a Wreath of Palm-tree leaves, are attributed to peace as a Goddess. I know the Holy Scriptures speak of Peace, Mercy, Justice, etc as of Persons. But I no where find them distinguished by their peculiar Habits'. p. 30

Mallet was only reiterating what Pope had said years before when he came to translate the *Iliad*, which was that he preferred the authority of one true poet above that of twenty critics or commentators.¹ Under the guise of a literary critic Blackwell appreciated the efforts and the literary skill that Pope had demonstrated with his translations. He believed that just as Virgil had done for Theocritus, and Boileau had done for Horace, Pope had done the same for both Horace and Homer. Namely, that he had taken the sentiments and characteristics of a Roman satirist and Greek epic poet, and applied them to modern life and manners of which they were the masters'.² There also a point to be made here about literary pride. Pope's *Iliad* was translated by a man who had relatively little Greek. This was not a problem for him as he believed that the poetical fire was the key element and not his ability to translate. In this respect it is typical of the reductive Scots criticism espoused by Daiches which criticises Allan Ramsay's attempts to translate Horace on the grounds that he had no Latin, but is prepared to excuse English poets for exactly the same 'offence'. To apply this insight to Ruddiman, although he was the publisher of Ramsay the union between the two appeared to be a purely financial one, nevertheless, he must have observed some quality in his works otherwise he would not have consented to the arrangement. In finishing with Ruddiman, I feel it is important to show that he was sensitive to aesthetical criticism in certain regards, in particular to demonstrate that the two could act in harmony. In his own observations on poetic diction, he eloquently achieved this feat, while simultaneously illustrating what the ultimate goal of poetry was:

By *poetical Diction*, I mean a kind of artificial Language, consisting partly of Words and Phrases, invented by, and almost peculiar to Poets: But chiefly in the frequent Use of proper and expressive Epithets, of strong and affecting

¹ Levine, *Battle of the Books*, p. 195

² Thomas Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* (3 vols., London, 1753-1764), II, p. 263

Figures and Metaphors, of lively and natural Descriptions, and as it were the very Images and Representations of the Things spoken of; with all those agreeable Turns of Wit and Fancy, and all other Ornaments of Language and Thought, which are proper to work upon the Affections of the Reader, and to strike his Mind with Admiration and Delight, which is the chief, if not the sole End of all true Poetry.¹

His words serve as a metaphor not only for his own critical system, but can be extended to accommodate the development of rhetoric not only at Edinburgh, but within the whole of Scotland. The later generation of critics such as Hugh Blair, Adam Smith and George Campbell at Aberdeen were championed as the men who grafted modern belles-lettres on to a classical framework which made them vital not only in terms of their practical use in Scotland, but valuable as a commercial export to the Atlantic. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, this blending and blurring of the critical process had begun well before the 1750s. Ruddiman, so often pigeonholed as a pedantic grammarian, had a more cultivated literary style than he has previously been given credit for. At the University of Edinburgh, the development of belles-lettres did not have a lineal descent from Blair's inception as the Professor of Rhetoric and Belles-lettres, but instead grew from the Logic class of John Stevenson, and even crossed departmental boundaries into the domain of history, which was exploited by Charles Mackie in his search for the truths of history. These figures clearly had a great deal to offer in the clubs of Edinburgh too. In fact, it is crucial to remember that belles-lettres and the development of criticism were not the sole invention and preserve of the university educated elites, but were vital engines in the exchange of ideas and a platform for people of all walks of life to investigate literature in the polite society of others. Ultimately it was this flexibility of

¹ Ruddiman, *Vindication*, pp. 58-59

belles-lettres which allowed it to become so widespread and dominant. Its great ability to metamorphosise from rhetoric to belles-lettres and then literary criticism, meant that not only was its development continuous, but that it also defied and still continues to defy the compartmentalizing of it as a subject with narrow boundaries constrictively forced into the modern concept of criticism which is found in Literature departments of the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 4: RHETORIC AND POLITICS

The political debates which surrounded the Union of 1707 and the literature which became entwined with it, most notably through a substantial pamphlet war, have often been dismissed as little more than propaganda, before the serious business of voting could take place. P. W. J. Riley condemned the whole debate on the union as little more than a propaganda duel, adding that votes and not literature, decided the fate of the Union.¹ While it is undoubtedly true that it was votes which decided the result, it is imprudent to denigrate the influence that the debates, both written and oral, had on the actual outcome of the Treaty of Union. Most recently Karin Bowie has demonstrated that Scottish public opinion was strong enough to secure concessions in the Articles of Union, and that their keen involvement in the process of Union yielded tangible political results.² Likewise, Christopher Whatley has recognised the power that the unenfranchised possessed in attacking the politicians within Scotland. This was a power which was transmitted through songs, verses, broadsheets and signed addresses.³ Therefore, while it was votes that ultimately decided the resulting Union of 1707, the debates which surrounded it were vital in deciding where those votes actually went. The debates themselves present a myriad of arguments both for and against union.⁴ Both of the dominant parties in the Scottish parliament, the Court party and the Country party,

¹ P. W. J. Riley, *The Union of Scotland and England: A Study in Anglo-Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 1978), p. 245. This is a natural extension of William Ferguson's argument that the Union was simply a political job, which was conceived and executed entirely by the parliaments themselves. See William Ferguson, 'The Making of the Treaty of Union of 1707', *Scottish Historical Review* 43 (1964), pp. 89-110. J. A. Downie has further emphasised Ferguson's belief in the Union as a political job by citing Daniel Defoe and his pamphleteering as the literary embodiment of this. J. A. Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press: Propaganda and Public Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge, 1979)

² Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699-1707* (Suffolk, 2007)

³ Christopher Whatley and Derek J. Patrick, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh, 2006)

⁴ For a checklist of the Union debates see, W. R. McLeod, *Anglo-Scottish Tracts, 1701-1714: A Descriptive Checklist* (Lawrence, 1979)

eventually recognised that real political capital could be made by attempting to sway the public through print. However, out of the two it was the Country party that realised the benefits of print before their opponents, employing it from the late 1690s and up to the Union itself. From the end of 1706 the Country party writers began to increase their output of patriotic rhetoric, and in particular they made strong pleas to the parliament's politicians to protect the nation from the impending treaty. The Court party did eventually recognise the power of print, and began a more concerted response after 1703 to counter the propaganda of their opponents. During this period essay periodicals also provided party propaganda via print, for example *The Rehearsal* offered a Tory perspective, while *The Observer* sided with the Whigs. The greatest exponent of the periodical press in this period was Daniel Defoe, whose *Review* presented the moderate, and more often than not, pro-Scottish standpoint. The most sophisticated arguments on both sides came from the highly literate men in the employ of the nobles and politicians of Scotland and England whose debates in the parliament often spilled onto the printed page. As a consequence it would be easy to conclude that as the printed form of the debates would require sufficient levels of literacy the majority of Scotland's people would be excluded from them. However, as R. A. Houston has identified, literacy rates in Scotland in this period were on similar footing with those of other kingdoms in western Europe.¹ R. S. Rait and Albert Dicey acknowledged the importance of the pamphlets and petitions on either side as a means of ascertaining the truths of the various arguments. For the reading public in Scotland constituted a larger proportion of the population than England, and therefore it was more than worthwhile to appeal to the sentiments of a largely educated

¹ R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity: Illiteracy and Society in Scotland and northern England, 1600-1800* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 22

community.¹ While the more nuanced political arguments may have eluded them, their knowledge of the political situation itself would have been augmented by the numbers of sermons, letters and general conversation that would have permeated Scotland in this period.² In short, the period before Union was one of literary and linguistic flux where the rhetoric of political debate moved from oral disputation, to printed word, and back again. Despite this movement from oral to written forms of rhetoric, the debates have been almost universally overlooked as examples of the development of rhetoric and literary criticism simply because they do not fit the model of polite literature which has come to dominate the worldview of eighteenth century literary criticism.³ This is a dangerous assumption to make for it was clear even in the midst of the Union debates that certain individuals deliberately ensured that their speeches ended up in printed form in order to reach a wider audience. This group of men included Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653-1716), the most eloquent and forceful opponent of the Union, George Mackenzie (1630-1714), the Earl of Cromarty, who was a staunch supporter of the Union, Lord James Hamilton (1658-1712), the leader of the Country opposition to the Union, and John Hamilton, Lord Belhaven (1656-1708), whose speeches achieved a great standing among the general populace, but were also avidly read by the government ministers in London, wary of the patriotic fervour that his words could provoke. Furthermore, the speeches made by men such as Belhaven, Fletcher and George Baillie of Jerviswood were not necessarily made along party lines, but were in fact the effusions of independently

¹ Albert V. Dicey and Robert S. Rait, *Thoughts on the Union Between England and Scotland* (London, 1920), p. 224

² Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, p. 25. Bowie has also argued that while most historical accounts include a review of the 1706-7 pamphlet debates, few of them actually place the debates within the wider context of public discourse on the British Union. This is important because it was a result of the increasing quantity of political print from the late 1690s. Karin Bowie, 'Scottish Public Opinion and the Making of the Union of 1707' (2 vols., Glasgow University PhD Thesis, 2004), I, p. 72

³ See Introduction

minded men who had particular points to make, for or against the union, without being tied to the party line.

What this chapter will demonstrate, is that the main protagonists of the Union debates, and the most successful writers on the subject, were those who were able to deploy rhetorical devices and respond critically to the arguments of their opponents more effectively in order to convince members of the parliament and the public at large of their position. The most famous battle of this type was between the fiery patriotic rhetoric of Belhaven, and the English man of letters Defoe, who opposed him in print by the means of both poetry and prose.¹ As the man who made an important contribution to the development of the novel with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Defoe brings a particular literary significance to these debates. Along with Dryden, he was a vital force in extending the idea of literature beyond the rigid confines of the classical conception, and his writings included periodical essays, history, biography, memoirs and travel books, forms which, according to Paula R. Backscheider, every era since the Renaissance has found troublesome.² As a consequence of these literary advances, it would be prudent to account for his activities in Scotland which were conducted in close proximity to the parliament. Defoe spent a total of fifteen months in the country penning tracts in support of the Union, although prior to the summer of 1706 his interest was mainly taken up with safeguarding the English dissenters³ and Protestantism in Europe.¹ It was not until the

¹ Defoe was a prolific writer who had a literary output unmatched by any of his contemporaries. Before his death he had written over sixty-five individual works on issues affecting Dissenters, fifty-five pieces on the threat of Jacobitism, around thirty-five on the Union, more than thirty on debates that led to the peace of Utrecht, and many more on controversies such as the benefits of William's Partition Treaty, the standing army, the Act of Settlement, reactions to the 1710 change of ministry and the accession of George I. Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: Ambition and Innovation* (Lexington, 1986), p. 45

² Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe*, p. 5

³ Defoe's best known pamphlet was *The Shortest-way with the Dissenters: or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church* (1702) which was a satirical paper on the treatment of dissenters in the Church

May of 1706 that he began to focus on the Union question, which he began in earnest with the first of six essays at Removing National Prejudices against a Union with Scotland.² The sheer volume of poetry and prose which the debates over the Union generated illustrates the impact that print culture had on swaying opinion. For the Jacobites, song and verse were the mediums that best provided them with the opportunity to criticise their opponents over the Union Treaty.³ Indeed, if the literary merits of the union debates are discussed at all it is primarily done through the interaction of these two figures.⁴ The conflict between Belhaven and Defoe does however provide a perfect guide with which to explore further the maze of the union pamphlets for a number of reasons. Primarily it draws attention to high profile figures operating on both sides of the debate who were able to reach large audiences with the quality of their works. Secondly, both

of England, written in the style, and using the language of, the High Church sermons and pamphlets. However, the pamphlet was actually taken to be a serious piece of writing in some quarters and was warmly received by those he set out to castigate. Once he was found to be the author, Defoe was pilloried for his troubles. The experience most likely made him aware of the skill needed to write quality pamphlets in a responsible manner, which aided him in the Union debates.

¹ Scottish historians have rarely been kind to Defoe owing to the fact that he was acting as a spy while he was writing in Edinburgh. P. W. J. Riley labeled him an English agent who said what he was paid to say, and brought nothing new or original to the debates. Riley, *The Union of Scotland and England*, p. 244. While Paul H. Scott has acidly remarked, 'Defoe was too good a propagandist to allow consistency to spoil a good argument'. Paul H. Scott, *Defoe in Edinburgh and other papers* (East Linton, 1995), p. 10

² Defoe released these pamphlets in a series between 1706-1707, which allowed him to respond to the criticism of his previous works. His most able and persistent critics in this debate were James Hodges and George Ridpath.

³ For the Jacobites use of poetry and verse in the construction of their identity, see: Allan I. MacInnes, 'Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause or National Movement?', *Scottish Historical Review* 86 (2007) pp. 225-252; Daniel Szechi, 'Constructing a Jacobite: The Social and Intellectual Origins of George Lockhart of Carnwarth', *Historical Journal* 40 (1997), pp. 977-996. In the aftermath of the Union the poetry of the movement was directed at reasserting the political identity of Scotland. The most overt example of this was Allan Ramsay and the Easy Club, which provided literary opposition to the Union. It would appear however, that they were Jacobites in name only, for they did not take up arms when the 1715 rising occurred. The Jacobites too employed a rich combination of sacred and classical allusions in their works in order to build their case. For they portrayed Scotland as akin to Israel, abused by England as a larger aggressive neighbour, and ultimately abandoned by its true king, who would one day return. Equally they played upon the epic representations of Virgil's *Aeneid* depicting the exiled Stuart King as the wandering hero. Murray Pittock has observed that the name Aeneas, which was used not infrequently as a Jacobite title owes much to this association. Murray Pittock, *Scottish Nationality*, pp. 69-70

⁴ David Macaree, 'The Flyting of Daniel Defoe and Lord Belhaven', *Studies in Scottish Literature* 13 (1978), pp. 72-80, Leith Davis, *Acts of Union: Scotland and the literary negotiation of the British nation, 1707-1832* (Stanford, 1998)

deployed differing rhetorical devices in order to secure their points. Belhaven relied heavily on classical allusion and citations from the ancient world mixed with a smattering of Christian references, whereas Defoe, an English dissenter raised as a Presbyterian built most of his arguments through the language of the bible.¹ In particular he would deploy elaborate biblical, although sometimes he also indulged in mythic, metaphors which were designed to provide a vision of the dangers the Scots and English faced, which could only be overcome with the completed Union. In a similar fashion, many of the literary productions of the union debates demonstrate either an appreciation of the classics or deploy biblical references in order to persuade an audience, for example, *Aesop in Scotland – Exposed in ten select fables relating to the times* (1704) and the *Carmen Irenicum* (1702), or the plethora of sermons which were printed at the time.² The majority of the most learned speeches which emanated from the parliament were rich with the lessons taught in the bible and the classics, while at the same time they were reflective of the political machinery in other European countries. The style of these two figures is also worth investigating for the type of rhetoric which they ultimately deployed. Belhaven had frequent recourse to the martial prowess of Scotland, and constantly referred back to Scotland's unbroken chain of independence, which certainly played well with the public, but which did not always hit its mark in the parliament. On the other hand Defoe

¹ Defoe studied in a dissenting academy at Newington Green under Charles Morton (1627-1698) and it was here that he developed an appreciation for literature. According to Defoe he lectured in English on science, politics and culture, as well as eloquence. He also carried out instruction on Calvinist Theology, civil and ecclesiastical history, Constitutional law, geography and experimental science. Furthermore Morton taught Samuel Wesley, the father of the famous evangelist John. See Thomas Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces* (Pittsburgh, 1997), Chapter 3: 'Liberal Education in the Dissenting Academies'.

² *Aesop in Scotland – Exposed in ten select fables relating to the times* (London, 1704); Elkanah Settle, *Carmen Irenicum: The Happy Union of the Two East India Companies. An Heroick Poem* (London, 1702). This was followed up with a pro-Union poem written in both English and Latin which depicted Britain as a new powerful entity of almost mythic proportions, and a rightful inheritor of its Roman counterpart. Elkanah Settle, *Carmen Irenicum: The Union of the Imperial Crowns of Great Britain. An Heroick Poem* (London, 1707)

employed a smoother style which revolved around the reasoned arguments of economic improvement in the country, access to colonial markets and an opportunity for the Scots to remove the shackles of poverty which had heretofore kept them down. Such a difference in styles therefore raises a third point concerning the appropriate use of rhetoric and criticism in differing media, as the incorrect application of it prevented the protagonist from adequate persuasion and rendered their eloquence inert.

The most significant contributor to the Union debates in terms of both the force of his argument and the quality of his writing was Andrew Fletcher.¹ As a youth, Fletcher had the good fortune to be tutored by Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), who left behind an educational plan for the instruction of young men.² Burnet recognised the talent that Fletcher possessed, but was concerned to note that he often let his passionate nature get the better of him. He described him as, ‘A Scotch gentleman of great parts, but very hot and violent, and a most passionate and indiscreet assertor of public liberty’.³ This description of him was echoed by Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676-1755), who considered him to be,

A man a little untoward in his temper, and much inclined to Eloquence. He made many speeches in Parliament, which are all printed, but was not very dexterous in making extemporary replies. He was, however, a very Honest Man, and meant well in every thing he said and did, except in cases where his humure, passion, or prejudices were suffered to get the better of his reason.⁴

¹ John Robertson has gone as far as to say that the quality of the Scottish Union debate was owing almost entirely to the superiority of his talents. Although Belhaven, George Ridpath, James Hodges, William Seton, Defoe and Francis Grant all possessed intelligence and political knowledge, it was Fletcher who provided the most sustained opposition. John Robertson, ‘The Union Debate in Scotland 1698-1707’, in, John Robertson, ed., *A Union for Empire: Political thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 203

² See chapter 6

³ *A Supplement to Burnet’s History of My Own Time*, ed., H. C. Foxcroft (Oxford, 1902), p. 161

⁴ John Clerk, *Clerk of Penicuik’s Memoirs* ed., John M. Gray (Edinburgh, 1892), p. 49. George Lockhart also acknowledged his eloquence in the parliament, stating, ‘The indignities and oppression Scotland lay

Clerk's words demonstrate where the power of Fletcher's rhetoric was most effective. Fletcher's fiery eloquence in the parliament was sometimes a hindrance in transmitting his undoubtedly potent ideas, therefore the subsequent printing of his arguments designed for a wider reading public was Fletcher's main weapon, rather than the heated exchange of wit in the parliament where, as Burnet and Clerk intimated, his passion reduced his effectiveness.¹ Francis Espinasse has previously identified that Fletcher's persuasive ability lay more in his writing than in his oratory, although there is still much to be admired in the latter, for he states: 'As a writer he is superior to any Scotsman of his age, and his oratory, nervous and incisive, is made eloquent by his sincerity and earnestness'.² Likewise Sir John Dalrymple spoke highly of Fletcher's literary abilities in his efforts to persuade an audience in his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (1788). 'Mr Fletcher's style is easily known, because every word had a precise meaning, and distinct from any other in the sentence; the structure of the sentence is as simple, but as varied as that which is used in private conversation; the method in his composition is perfectly regular, but artfully concealed... arguments are placed in an order to derive force from what went before, and to give force to what comes after, so as to seem to grow out of each other'.³ Fletcher's style is reminiscent of the style advocated by the literati of the later Enlightenment. The natural force of Fletcher's arguments were augmented by his grasp of literary techniques, which Dalrymple praised in a distinctly belletristic manner.

under, gaul'd him to the heart; so that in his learned and elaborate discourses he exposed them with undaunted courage and pathetick eloquence'. *The Lockhart Papers, containing Memoirs and commentaries upon the Affairs of Scotland from 1702 to 1715 by George Lockhart* (2 vols., London, 1817), I, p. 75

¹ Not only did it reduce his effectiveness, it got him into trouble on more than one occasion, most notably when he dueled with the Earl of Roxburghe, John Ker, on Leith sands.

² Francis Espinasse, quoted in, Paul H. Scott, *Andrew Fletcher and the Treaty of Union* (Edinburgh, 1994), p. 68

³ Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1788), Appendix VIII, p. 332

Furthermore his compositions were akin to the method of preaching sermons which David Fordyce would go on to advocate in the 1740s, because they hid the machinery of grammatical principles behind a smooth surface which appeared both natural and simple. Fletcher admitted to Robert Wodrow that he learned his orations as he would his grammar. Wodrow recalled: 'He did it every day [memorizing his speeches], and directly repeated some of them ten or twenty times; and being uncertain what matters were to come before them, he was obliged to have six or ten speeches, upon distinct heads in readiness at once'.¹ Dalrymple also acknowledged that his passions were capable of affecting his written style in a manner similar to that of his orations, for, 'when he is animated with passion, his flashes are sometimes as quick as lightning, and sometimes followed by a thunder of a period'.² Unlike Belhaven's orations which were designed to speak to the people, Fletcher's printed speeches were intended for a narrower audience, yet still an audience which could disseminate his ideas. He did not play, as Belhaven did, to the stereotypical markers of identity in order to evoke an impassioned response. In fact, despite his own reputation for heated reaction, his political pamphlets represented the cool and rational face of reason. The defence of liberty was the cornerstone of Fletcher's political ideology, and in his attempts to defend Scottish liberty he was determined to show that even after the revolution of 1688, England still lacked the extensive liberty which it claimed for itself. In a speech to the Scottish parliament in 1701 he asserted that: 'The English nation have now nothing remaining but the outward appearance and carcase... of their antient constitution. The spirit and soul is fled.

¹ Robert Wodrow, *Analecta* Maitland Club (4 vols., Edinburgh, 1842-1843), II, p. 46

² Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, p. 333

Jealousy for publick liberty is vanished'.¹ The problem for Scotland, according to Fletcher, was that since the Union of the Crowns the English had effectively controlled the administrative apparatus of the country to the extent that it appeared more, 'like a conquered province, than a free independent people'.² Fletcher presented the situation as a stark reality, rather than use the opportunity to make an appeal to the unbroken chain of Scottish independence. The reason for this was that under the present system the Scots were actually dependent on the English. In order to shake this dependency a practical political solution was required, not the sugared drops of eloquence. It was under these circumstances that he put forward his famous limitations, which were designed to establish the conditions of a government under which the Estates should receive the Successor to the Scottish Crown, if that successor was also the king of England.³ Fletcher was certainly aware of the power of literature, for he recounted an acquaintance who believed that, 'If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation'.⁴ He then went on to recall that the ancient legislators believed they could not reform the manners of any city without the aid of a lyric, and sometimes a dramatic poet. However, he was quick to add that this system was open to abuse, and those that were hired to instill virtue could also be used to instill vice.

Although Fletcher was certainly a big political hitter in the anti-Union movement, perhaps the most famous speech delivered in the Scottish parliament was Belhaven's oration on Saturday the 2nd November 1706, which became known as 'The Vision'. It is

¹ Andrew Fletcher, 'A Speech upon the State of the Nation; in April 1701', in, *The Political Works of Andrew Fletcher Esq.* (London, 1732), p. 247

² Andrew Fletcher, 'Speeches by a Member of the Parliament, which began at Edinburgh the 6th of May 1703', in, *Political Works*, p. 271

³ For more on the limitations see: W. C. Mackenzie, *Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun: His Life and Times* (Edinburgh, 1935), pp. 161-184

⁴ Andrew Fletcher, 'An account of a conversation concerning a right regulation of governments for the common good of mankind', in, *Political Works*, p. 372

this piece more than any other which has enshrined his position in the eyes of nationalists as a staunch patriot for the Scottish cause, and the speech itself continued throughout the eighteenth century to circulate in various printed forms among those who remained anti-Unionist. John Wilson, an elocution teacher in Edinburgh at the end of the eighteenth century included part of the speech in his *Principles of Elocution* (1798) stating that it was a perfect example of popular and dramatic eloquence.¹ Indeed in the Victorian age the speech was even described as ‘a crowned masterpiece of eloquence’. However, Belhaven’s own self-interest is a factor which must be accounted for in assessing the true feelings of his rhetoric, for he was not always the patriot that he appeared to be. In 1705 after losing a post in the treasury under the Duke of Argyll he changed his allegiance to the Country Party.² Nor was the good of the people always at the forefront of this thinking either, as Rosalind Mitchison has reported. For in the 1690s he refused to provide relief to the starving poor on his land, because it would result in a shortfall in excise revenues.³ Nevertheless, Belhaven certainly cared about his country and while self-interest may have driven him, protecting his *patria* was part of that interest. This patriotic streak in Belhaven is detectable prior to the 1706-7 debates, as well as before his 1705 switch of allegiance. In 1703 he gave a speech in parliament seconding proposals for the Act anent Peace and War (1703), where he argued that although he accepted the royal prerogative, he was nevertheless concerned that the Scottish royal prerogative was being subordinated to the English royal prerogative. Likewise, in the printed 1701 speech, ‘On the Affair of the Indian and African Company, and its Colony of Caledonia’,

¹ John Wilson, *Principles of Elocution, and Suitable Exercises; or, Elegant Extracts, in Prose and Verse* (Edinburgh, 1798), pp. 225-7

² Whatley, *Scots and the Union*, pp. 48-9

³ Rosalind Mitchison, *From Lordship to Patronage: Scotland, 1603-1745* (London, 1983), p. 135

he wrote about the vital importance of Scottish independence, against the backdrop of the Darien debacle.¹ It was in this pamphlet that Belhaven also wrote about the discrepancy between the written and the spoken word.² In his preface to the reader, he announced that he did not design it for the press, but on account of several members of the parliament encouraging him, he decided to release it to the world. The speech itself is not without irony, because owing to the seriousness of the affair, Belhaven remarked that it was a time for cool heads, and any action which would be taken ought to be, ‘as the results of solid and sound Reason and Reasoning, and not the effects and consequences of our too often fatal Picques and Passions’.³ This appeal to reason contrasted sharply with the more emotive language of ‘The Vision’, and leads me to believe that Belhaven understood the rhetoricians need to address different audiences with varying oratorical techniques.⁴ When he addressed the parliament to sway the minds of ministers, reason and rationality were his tools of choice; however, in the case of ‘The Vision’ he was more than likely addressing the public, even though the speech itself was delivered in the parliament. Therefore Belhaven’s eloquence possesses a subtlety for which he has very rarely been given credit. This situation has not been helped by the polarising reactions to his most famous speech, which either sees him vilified or venerated. Indeed, a future editor of his

¹ The anonymous pamphlet *A Defence of the Scots Settlement at Darien* (1699) may also have been written by Belhaven. This work makes clear that the Scots’ sovereignty had been ‘trampled underfoot’ by the current monarchy.

² Lord Belhaven, *A Speech in Parliament, the 17th of July 1705*, ([Edinburgh], 1705); Lord Belhaven, *A Speech in Parliament on the 10th day of January 1701, by the Lord Belhaven: On the Affair of the Indian and African Company, and its Colony of Caledonia* (Edinburgh, 1701)

³ Belhaven, *Speech in Parliament on the 10th day of January 1701*, p. 3

⁴ It is necessary to add a caveat here. For while this speech is far less heated than ‘The Vision’, it does contain exactly the same pause, brought on by the emotion of the situation. ‘Yea indeed, My Lord, I must stop, for I find Old Caledonia-Blood too hot in my Veins, my Pulse beats too quick for my Tongue, my Heart is too large for my Breast, and my Choler form my Reason’. *Ibid.*, p. 9

speeches in parliament waxed lyrical on Belhaven's ability to speak with a pre-possessing eloquence which would not have looked amiss at the forum at Rome.

His Lordship pronounce[d] ... in the last Parliament of SCOTLAND, with perhaps as Pathetick, Moving and Persuasive (tho' not so successful) Eloquence, as ever Tully, the chief Orator of *Rome*. Declaim'd in the *Roman Senate*, against Cataline's Conspiracy, or on any other Occasion whatsoever; or as *Demosthenes*, the most famous orator of *Greece*, ever moved and exhorted his Fellow-Citizens of *Athens*, and all the other Grecian Common Wealths, unanimously, in all Events, and at all Hazards, so stand by and support one another, in Maintaining and Defending Their *Rights, Liberties, Properties, and Independency* against the then invading Armies of *Philip King of Macedon*, the Father of *Alexander the Great*.¹

While the praise for Belhaven here is both hyperbolic and unmerited, the editor has clearly picked up on his strong allusion to the classical world, and has subsequently transposed it into his description of the Scottish politician. It would certainly be a stretch to claim for Belhaven anything approaching the rhetorical skills of a Cicero or a Demosthenes, nevertheless it is significant that the perception of Belhaven is one of a figure trying to defend his country against the political machinations of its politicians armed only with his own rhetorical prowess.² Despite promoting Belhaven's abilities beyond their capacity, his editor points to the importance of the civic orator and his crucial role in the state machinery. For he goes on to divulge the political importance of orators to a country, and cited the example of Philip of Macedon surrounding Athens and promising to enter into a peace treaty if they would send their ten best orators, including

¹ *The Late Lord Belhaven's Memorable Speeches: In the Last Parliament of Scotland holden at Edinburgh in November 1706*, (Edinburgh, 1741), p. v

² William Mathieson had mixed feelings about the speech stating that it was, 'the greatest, the most popular, if also the most turgid, and overstrained of all Belhaven's political harangues'. William L. Mathieson, *Scotland and the Union* (Glasgow, 1905), p. 129. Michael Fry argues that the speech still springs from the page, but concedes that, 'there must have been something about the delivery to provoke ribaldry from certain corners of the chamber'. Michael Fry, *The Union: England, Scotland and the Treaty of 1707* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 262

Demosthenes, as hostages in return. The Athenians refused on the grounds that it would have deprived them of their best and ablest guardians of liberty and independence.

Likewise Belhaven, described as ‘that Noble Scotch Orator’ was viewed in the same light as a defender of Scottish liberty.¹ After his death in 1708, tributes to his eloquence began to appear in print, despite the failure of his cause. An *Elegy on the Never enough to be Lamented Death of Lord John Hamilton of Belhaven*, not only compared his oratory with Cicero’s but also with Demosthenes, and his writing style with that of Homer.²

Ultimately though, his oratory has too much in it that may be viewed as mock heroic to be considered as true eloquence.³ In particular the classical allusion to Caledonia sitting like Caesar in the middle of the senate vulnerable to the machinations of its politicians, ready to strike a treacherous blow against it, makes it hard for the modern reader to sympathise with.

To a modern reader, the highly emotive speech reads like a histrionic harangue, and if it provokes any kind of reaction at all, it is usually one of derision or mirth directed at the style of the oration.⁴ However, the modern compulsion to reject the speech as the screechings of an overly-passionate man lamenting the death of his country’s independence obscures the fact that he was making a number of serious points in the course of the speech. Although it has attained notoriety among historians, John Burton, in

¹ *Belhaven’s Memorable Speeches*, p. v-vi

² Anon., *Elegy on the Never enough to be Lamented Death of Lord John Hamilton of Belhaven, who departed from this Life* (Edinburgh, 1708)

³ James Mackinnon, *The Union of England and Scotland*, (London, 1896) pp. 292-295

⁴ It was this overly emotional style which has led G. M. Trevelyan to argue that the Scots rejection of the Union was brought about through popular poetry, tradition and history, all strong influences on an imaginative and emotional race. Trevelyan follows Defoe’s line too loyally here which results in a two dimensional interpretation of events. In this respect he adheres too rigidly to English Whig ideology without questioning the myths which surrounded the Scots. As a result, Belhaven’s speech provided him with ample ammunition to propagate this viewpoint. G. M. Trevelyan, *England Under Queen Anne: Ramillies and the Union with Scotland* (London, 1932), pp. 274-275

his epic *History of Scotland* actually argued that despite the defects of the work, such as its Scotticisms, Gallicisms and monstrous affectation, it was in fact a piece of oratory which could stand shoulder to shoulder with later pieces of English oratory, for its bold and apt illustration, and ought to be justly recognised.¹ William Ferguson has suggested that because of the emotional language the speech actually reads better than it would have sounded.² There is certainly an element of truth to this, because at the time the speech was derided by those in the Scottish parliament, while it was venerated by the general public who gathered round it as a beacon of patriotic rhetoric. Therefore it is necessary to unpack this speech in order to ascertain what was in it that initiated such a rupture between these two groups in Scottish society.

The most notable factor when reading the speech is the highly rhythmical style which Belhaven adopted. Having kept to the ancient rules of rhetoric which demanded that one should start off with a simple notion, and refrain from dressing it up with the ornaments of eloquence, he began very plainly by stating that he had several disagreements with the Union. He accepted that there were a plethora of issues which merited attention, commenting, 'I find my mind crowded with variety of very melancholy thoughts; and I think it my duty to disburden myself of some of them'.³ From this stage onwards he began each paragraph with the line, 'I think I see...' which is why the speech

¹ Burton states in full: 'It would be impossible to stumble on this production, in any shape, without acknowledging in it the work of an artist. In despite of Scotticisms, Gallicisms, overstretching classicality, and monstrous affectation, it would stand beside any efforts of later English oratory; and probably, were it examined at an age so distant as not to give the later speaker the benefit of a distinctly perceptible adaptation to acknowledged conventionalisms, it would be found to have few competitors among them in the essentials of heroic oratory – rapid and potent diction, impassioned appeal, bold and apt illustration'. John H. Burton, *The History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Extinction of the last Jacobite Insurrection* (8 vols., Edinburgh, 1897), VIII, p. 129

² William Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England: A Survey to 1707* (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 259

³ Belhaven, *Speech in Parliament, The second day of November 1706 on the matter of an Union betwixt the two Kingdoms of Scotland and England* (Edinburgh, 1706), p. 3

became known as the vision. In the ensuing speech itself Belhaven established four main points from which he built his platform. Primarily and most importantly, he determined that Scotland was a free and independent kingdom which had never been conquered, but which now by considering anything more than a federal union, was in very real danger of simply giving that freedom away. Secondly, he shrewdly identified that the National Church of Scotland had been founded on a rock, which had been secured by the 1689 Claim of Right. Religion was perhaps the single most important factor in the debate over the Union, with more ink spilt in its service than on either political or economic considerations.¹ This is most emphatically realised by the fact that the Act of Security for the Church of Scotland (1706) had to be instigated before negotiations over the Union could even take place. Belhaven recognised the importance of this tool, and as a consequence sought to fire the prejudices of his listeners, not so much in the parliament, but in the streets of the country. Viscount Seafield had estimated as much at the time, concluding that the speech was, ‘contrived to incense the common peopel’.² This was evident because he played to the fear of a British parliament instigating toleration acts which would put the established church, ‘upon an equal level with Jews, Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Anabaptists, and other Sectaries’.³ Once he had aroused the passions of his audience, by playing upon their religious fears and concerns, he then proceeded to fire their patriotism by appealing to the martial prowess of Scotland, but

¹ Colin Kidd, ‘Religious Realignment between the Restoration and Union’, in, John Robertson, ed., *A Union for Empire: Political thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 145-168; Jeffrey Stephen, *Scottish Presbyterians and the Act of Union 1707* (Edinburgh, 2007); J. G. A. Pocock, ‘The Union in British History’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Sixth Series 10 (2000), pp. 181-196 The fear for most Presbyterians was that the Kirk would be absorbed along Episcopalian lines, resulting in the homogenizing of the Church into an Anglican system.

² *Lord Seafield’s Letters, 1702-1707*, ed., P. Hume Brown (Edinburgh, 1915), p. 100. Murray Pittock has also argued that the speech was more popular on the streets than in the Scots estates. Murray Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in eighteenth century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 153

³ Belhaven, *Speech in Parliament, The second day of November 1706*, p. 4

instead of swelling their pride, he alluded to the fact that the current peerage of Scotland were dishonouring their ancestors to the extent that they had allowed the honour of the country to erode away. Finally, he rounded upon those peers of Scotland who had permitted this situation to arise in the first place, and he recalled that those noble ancestors had previously, 'conquered provinces, over-run countries, reduced and subjected towns, and fortified place, [and] exacted tribute through the greatest part of England'.¹ Now he lamented that their descendants had laid aside their swords and sided with those English peers over whom they previously enjoyed a feudal superiority. With this last point, Belhaven's rhetoric achieved two goals. In the first instance, he linked the martial history of Scotland with the present day state of decay. Secondly, he created the perception that the Scottish peers were renouncing their hereditary rights, and were instead selling themselves out to the English. In the process of establishing these points, he changed focus from the independent kingdom of Scotland, through to its church, nobles, peers, barons, burghs, judges, soldiers, tradesmen, farmers, labouring class and finally Scottish mariners.² There is clearly a pattern here where the effect of the Treaty of Union will have a totalising impact throughout the entire fabric of Scottish society, and so Belhaven made an address to each and every one of these people. It illustrates that by casting his net so wide, Belhaven had one eye on the printed format of his oration, for this broad spectrum of support which he was attempting to foster was not something that he could have secured in the parliament alone. In the next paragraph he proceeded to appeal to the senses of the populace, arguing that in the present climate they have become

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4

² William Ferguson, while acknowledging the impact of the speech has dismissed it as disjointed. However, the systematic top down approach which Belhaven employed to encapsulate the entire populace was carefully measured and interlinked to address every part of the nation. Ferguson, *Scotland's relations with England*, p. 258

deadened while they submit themselves to English control.¹ Viewed in this light, while Belhaven's plea was most definitely impassioned, the spontaneity with which he is often accused of delivering it must be called into question, for the internal structure of the speech has been created in such a way that it raises simple points and builds them up into cohesive wholes which in turn drive forward the argument. In a similar fashion Belhaven's own claim in the parliament that he had to stop from completing his melancholy thoughts because he was overcome with grief and indignation about the nation's fate was more than likely a deliberate move on his part to garner sympathy for the speech. It certainly did not go down well in the parliament, but it did add to the myth of the speech itself in the public's perception.

The myth of national belonging was a powerful rhetorical tool for Belhaven as it was for the entire anti-Union faction, for it allowed them to draw from a reservoir of tradition and history which permeated the psyche of the entire country. Therefore by setting his oratory against a backdrop of a once proud nation impoverished by the economic constraints placed upon it by the English, and reduced to a state of dependency almost to the point of servitude he attempted to touch upon an exposed nerve of every Scottish patriot. He deliberately chose to liken Scotland to Rome in this case, because he envisaged the two nations as sharing a similar martial heritage. It also served another purpose since it allowed him to instil an image of patricide into the minds of his audience. 'I think I see our *Ancient Mother* CALEDONIA, like Caesar sitting in the midst of our Senate, Rufully looking round about Her, Covering herself with her Royal Garment, attending the Fatal Blow, and breathing out her last, with a *Et tu quoque mi fili*

¹ Belhaven, *Speech in Parliament, The second day of November 1706*, pp. 7-8

Squadrone'.¹ While his imagery has the distinct tinge of bathos about it to modern ears, at the time of the Union debates the betrayal of the Scottish people at the hands of its political parties would have struck a distinct chord with the people of Scotland.² The allusion also presents his audience with two distinct images. The overriding picture is that of Plutarch's history which demonstrates Belhaven's adherence to classical illustration. There is also a secondary image here, which gives his representation a more theatrical appearance, and that is the likeness of the scene to Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar*. Therefore, Belhaven was again doing two things with this image, on one hand he presented to those in the parliament an unmistakeable depiction of the historical significance of what they were doing to the country, but on the other he provided so obvious an image of Scotland's destruction that it would have been impossible for the populace at large to miss its importance. Belhaven then proceeded to take this classical allusion a stage further and began to pun upon the word parricide. He argued that death was the punishment for such an offence, but that patricide was a far greater crime to commit.³ Significantly he omitted to reveal what the punishment for this offence should be; a rhetorical device no doubt, but an omission for which he would have expected the general populace to provide suggestions. The speech was later printed in prose format, but its impact was so wide and extensive that years after the Union had taken place a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7. Belhaven continued this classical allusion comparing the danger that Scotland faced as akin to that of Hannibal marching on Rome. 'Hannibal, my Lord, is at our gates, Hannibal is come within our gates, Hannibal is come the length of this table, he is at the foot of this throne, he will demolish this throne; if we take not notice, he will seize upon these *Regalia*; he will take them as our *Spolia opima*, and whip us out of this house, never to return again'. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22

² Although the exact figures remain hazy, Christopher Whatley has estimated that around nine out of ten Scots were hostile to the Union, and mentions that unconfirmed reports put the numbers of anti-Union clubs formed after 1702 in the region of 200 compared to the only known pro-Union club; The Duke of Queensberry's Union Club. Christopher A. Whatley, *Bought and Sold for English Gold?: Explaining the Union of 1707* (Dundee, 1994)

³ Belhaven, *Speech in Parliament, The second day of November 1706*, p. 9

verse edition of the work appeared. *Belhaven's Vision* (1729) recounted stanza by stanza the argument outlined in the original. Significantly the poetic meter used in the poem was the 'Standard Habbie', which put down a marker of identity to take cultural pleasure in a political action.¹ The poem rigidly sticks to the pattern which Belhaven created, and does not add anything new to the debate.

The response to Belhaven's speech was instantaneous. In the parliament it was met with mocking derision by the assembled politicians. The Earl of Marchmont witheringly proclaimed, 'Behold he dreamed; but lo! When he awoke, he found it was a dream!'² Daniel Defoe writing to his political master Lord Harley³ summed up the course of events from the day with reference to the future publication of his opponents speech: 'D[uke] Hamilton Rav'd, Fletcher of Saltoun, and the Earle of Belhaven, made long speeches, the Latter of which will be printed – The Clamour without was so great that a Rabble was feared tho' the Guard are Numerous and were Drawn Out in Readyness'.⁴ The fact that Defoe specifically alluded to the likely publication of the speech illustrates the concerns that he had over its potential power to affect public opinion. Although he had delivered the speech on the Saturday, there were responses penned and distributed by the Monday to address the issues which he had raised in the parliament. Defoe was one of

¹ The Standard Habbie was used in Robert Sempill of Beltrees's poem, 'The Life and Death of the Piper of Kilbarchan', but was reinvigorated in the poetry of Allan Ramsay, who gave the meter its name. In the course of the eighteenth century the deployment of this type of meter gave a poem a unique Scottish moniker. In the quest for identity in the aftermath of the Union this badge of Scottishness was also employed in the poetry of Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. In this instance, the writer is blending together cultural identity by means of the style, with political identity by means of the most famous speech in Scotland that insisted upon a unique identity.

² Earl of Marchmont, quoted in, Dicey and Rait, *Thoughts on the Union*, p. 217

³ Defoe performed the function of a spy in Edinburgh, being the eyes and ears of Harley in the Scottish capital. John Clerk of Penicuik, who shared Defoe's goal of an incorporating Union, recalled that he was, 'sent to Scotland by the prime minister of England, the Earl of Godolphin, on purpose to give a faithful account to him from time to time how every thing past here. He was therefore a Spy amongst us, but not known to be such, otherways the Mob of Edin. had pulled him to pieces'. Clerk, *Memoirs*, pp. 63-64

⁴ *The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, ed., George Harris Healey (Oxford, 1955), p. 142

the first off the mark in his response to his Scottish adversary when he published *The Vision* (1706).¹ It was designed to demystify the language of Belhaven's speech, and at the same time dismantle his arguments in order to expose the faulty machinery behind it. Defoe chose to answer Belhaven in verse, rather than prose, which afforded him a livelier medium with which to attack his foe. This also reinforces the fact that Defoe was more concerned with how the speech would affect the public, rather than those in the parliament, although parliamentary reaction was less of a factor because of the adverse response to it in that forum. The awareness that Defoe possessed over the ability of rhetoric to inform public opinion manifested itself in a number of pamphlets where he directly addressed the people themselves, either hoping to reach them through reason, or to condemn them for riotous behaviour.² This demonstrates how shrewd the English man of letters was in his critical condemnation of the argument. Rather than make a foolish attempt to fight fire with fire, by producing a prose speech, which could have had disastrous consequences on the streets, the poetic format allowed Defoe to remain lucid and light hearted, while at the same time make some rapier like thrusts into the heart of the Scottish politician's arguments. However, he framed his arguments as Belhaven had done, focussing initially on the nation, before addressing the people of Scotland. By

¹ Another early poetic response to the speech raged against the quality of his rhetoric, although it was far less sophisticated than Defoe's effort, and amounted to little more than a harangue: 'Was there ever such Rhetorick found? / A Pox on the Villianous Rains; The Deluge his Reason has drown'd! And his Lordship must fish for his Brains!' Anon., *She put her Hand upon his Scull, With this Prophetick Blessing, Be Thou Dull* ([Edinburgh], 1706)

² [Daniel Defoe], *A Letter from Mr. Reason, to the high and mighty prince the mob* [Edinburgh, 1706]; [Daniel Defoe], *A short letter to the Glasgow-men* [Edinburgh, 1706]; [Daniel Defoe], *The Rabbler Convicted* ([Edinburgh], 1706). Defoe was severely reprimanded by the Glasgow Minister James Clark for his observations on the Glasgow riot, and responded to them with a point by point refutation of what Defoe had to say. He provided a list of errors that Defoe had made in his representation of events, and he even pulled him up for editing the account in a way that was less than truthful. 'He leaves out two Words, (then, there) and puts in one of his own (and) which makes it suspicious; he had not the Book of Truth by him, when he wrote this Piece of his History'. [James Clark], *A paper concerning Daniel Defoe* (Edinburgh, 1708), p. 2

doing this it allowed him to tackle point by point the issues which had been raised two days previously. One of the most striking factors of Defoe's poem is the word play which he employed to disrupt his opponent's message. His opening lines were clearly a reference to Marchmont's cutting dismissal:

Come hither ye Dreamers of Dreams,
Ye Soothsayers, Vizards and Witches,
That puzzle the World with hard Names,
And without any meaning make Speeches.¹

Here Defoe both attacked the mystical language with which Belhaven filled his own speech, and lambasted him for even making one which had no meaning in the first place. He continued in this manner by reducing the mystical quality of the vision, lampooning Belhaven as a figure who had received this revelation in the dark, but ultimately remained in the dark, and so as a consequence had in fact seen nothing. Although Defoe was more than capable of matching Belhaven in his deployment of classical motifs, he was also adept at using biblical imagery to knock down his points. He took Belhaven's own link between the soldier, the tradesman and the ploughman, and condensed it into an image of Christian peace and hard work, reminding his readers that the Scriptures had encouraged that, 'our Swords should to Plow-shares be broke'. Defoe undercut the argument both with a religious appeal, but also with an allusion to a more prosperous Scotland which was achievable through hard work, rather than an outmoded adherence to martial virtue which little served the country in the present climate. Indeed, one of the central planks of Defoe's pro-Union writings was the benefit to the economy that the Union would bring to the Scots. He crushed Belhaven's argument that in an incorporating union the Scots would secure virtually no trade, and instead questioned why the burghs

¹ Daniel Defoe, 'The Vision, A Poem: Being an Answer to Lord Belhaven's Speech' (Edinburgh, 1706), p. 1

would be afraid of the Union. The answer he gave was that they were in fact fearful of too much trade, which would subsequently be generated.¹ Half-way through the poem Defoe paused briefly to ask for a tear to be shed in sympathy for the mock melancholic scene he had just described.² Again this is a direct reference to Belhaven's pause in the middle of his own speech so that he may shed tears for his country, with the added irony that these tears come after what could only be of a benefit to the country. Finally, Defoe could not resist poking fun at the cry of '*Et tu quoque mi fili Squadrone*', for he argued that no one would be able to understand what the words meant. More importantly, he used this to explode the image of Caesar's assassination, by dismissing Belhaven's classical knowledge. Defoe concluded that Brutus was the one who had struck the blow for liberty against a tyrant, therefore the intended imagery of Caesar as the wronged party, was incongruously juxtaposed with the image of Scottish liberty suffering in the same way.

In his epic *The History of the Union of Great Britain* (1709) Defoe actually included Belhaven's speech in its entirety. This gesture of inclusion, one of the few speeches that made it into the history, has led William Ferguson to observe that it was a gesture on Defoe's behalf to rehabilitate the memory of his adversary.³ Defoe himself was ready to acknowledge that Belhaven exhibited a readiness to forget their quarrel, and with equal magnanimity Defoe remarked on their argument, 'I leave it as a useful observation to those who wanting temper as well as manners, can never dispute without heat, argue without railing or speak to their opponent but in opprobrious, vile, and filthy

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3

² *Ibid.*, p. 3

³ Ferguson, *Scotland's Relations with England*, p. 259

language'.¹ While he is right to allude to the fact that their political dispute did not erupt into a personal enmity, indeed the two went on to enjoy cordial relations, this would appear to be a misplaced assumption. The reality of the situation facing Defoe was that owing to the popularity and familiarity of the speech, he would have damaged his own position far more if he had omitted to include it in his work. As Leith Davis has intimated, Defoe was more than likely performing some form of containing exercise to prevent the poem from achieving further attention through its omission.² Defoe introduced the speech in a terse tone, merely stating that Belhaven had effectively side-stepped the previous speech, William Seton of Pitmeddon's address to the house in support of a full incorporating Union, which was of course Defoe's position.³ Defoe used Seton's speech as a direct contrast to Belhaven's. Seton's dialogue argued for a full incorporating Union on the grounds that Scotland was in such a weak position it could not raise itself by its own strength.⁴ John Clerk of Penicuik remarked that Seton was not known for his eloquence, however, little did either of them know of the significance which his address to the parliament would have, or the way in which it was used by Defoe to douse the fiery rhetoric of his passionate adversary. The style of the two speeches could hardly be more different. Seton's was cool and rational; it made appeals to the head rather than the heart, and accepted as its main premise the fact that without English help the Scots would not be able to engage in European commerce in a profitable manner.⁵ He also employed a clever rhetorical device to illustrate his contention that a

¹ Daniel Defoe, quoted in, Macaree, 'The Flyting of Daniel Defoe and Lord Belhaven', p. 79

² Davis, *Acts of Union*, p. 43

³ Daniel Defoe, 'An Abstract of the Proceedings of the Treaty of Union', in, *The History of the Union of Great Britain* (Edinburgh, 1709), p. 32

⁴ William Seton, *A Speech in Parliament the second day of November 1706* ([Edinburgh], 1706), p. 6

⁵ Seton appears to have taken a while to find his political feet. He first appeared on the scene with the anonymous pamphlet, *Memorial to the Members of Parliament of the Court Party* (1700). However, it was

federal union would not be in Scotland's best interests. Seton gave multiple examples of European Unions which had failed under the federal system, for example Portugal and Spain, and Denmark and Sweden. He then proceeded to counterbalance this with examples of countries that had once consisted of several independent kingdoms, but had now become one nation state. In this category he added both Scotland, made up of two kingdoms, and England, constructed by seven kingdoms. Viewed in this light, the union of the two was simply the result of a natural progression.¹ This jars with Belhaven's impassioned plea, which played upon Scotland's history as an independent nation, and the shame that any incorporating Union would bring to the people. Ultimately he recounted Marchmont's acerbic reply to the oration, and stated, 'This Answer, some said, was as Satisfactory to the Members, who understood the Design of that Speech, as if it had been Answered Vision by Vision'.² This is a deft piece of editing on Defoe's part because as later rhetoricians like William Leechman, Hugh Blair and David Fordyce would go on to promote with regard to pulpit oratory, the cool and rational sermon, was infinitely more desirable and proper for an audience than the one heated and fervent, that appealed to the emotions without any rationality to reinforce it. Therefore, in this instance, even Defoe's editorial decisions were calculated exercises to minimise the

not anonymous enough for he was imprisoned in the toll-booth of Edinburgh, owing to his open attack on church governance and King William. David Hume wrote in his diary that a petition was raised to secure his release because, 'he acknowledges his offense, and craves pardon, and promises more circumspection in time to come'. David Hume, *A Diary of the proceedings in parliament and the privy council of Scotland, May 21, 1700 – March 7, 1707* Bannatyne Club (Edinburgh, 1828), p. 20 Seafield, who raised the petition on his behalf received a letter from Alexander Ogilvie on behalf of Seton offering his services in the manner of a hired gun: 'Pittmeden younger pretends to a great keyndnes to your Lo[rds]hip, and sayes most serieouslie to me that if your Lo[rds]hip will obtain him a pension of one hundreth pound per annum, he will be your servant and give you a sutable returne'. Viscount Seafield, *Seafield Correspondence, from 1685 – 1708* (Edinburgh, 1912), p. 382. Although this exchange has often been used to cast doubt over his true intentions, one can observe that Seton threw his weight behind a closer Union with England from around the turn of the century when he published *The Interest of Scotland in Three Essays* (1700)

¹ Seton, *A Speech in Parliament*, pp. 7-10

² Defoe, 'Abstract of the Proceedings', p. 44

impact of the speech. Seton's work was in harmony with the Englishman's, for it contained many of the watchwords of Defoe's political and economic thinking. Words such as, 'trade', 'wealth', 'security' and 'power' are all present here, and littered throughout Defoe's works. This outlook is presented opposite Belhaven's which still harked back to military language, which promoted glory, independence and above all, the *Patria*.¹ While it would be unfair to Defoe to accuse him of avoiding the issue, owing to the fact that at the time he responded immediately to the piece itself in, 'The Vision', his decision merely to let another speech argue his case for him, points to the fact that the work was still an irritation to him, even though in the political arena, Defoe's cause had proved triumphant.

Ironically, when Belhaven in turn came to respond to the criticisms of his oratory he mistook the writer to be a fellow Scot owing to Defoe's practice of putting 'Scotticisms' in the poem. Furthermore, he actually surmised that the effort had sprung from the pens of two men, the Earl of Haddington and Dr. Welwood, and he coordinated his attack in their direction. He also had the Squadrone in his sights, when he stated, 'And let Squadrons go on // To Murder their Mother'.² Belhaven did pick up on the linguistic techniques that Defoe employed, even if he was unable to identify that it was him who had written the piece. Firstly, he dismissed the word play of 'The Vision' as 'nonsense, puns and Banter', and secondly he recognised the number of similes that were used in the poem, although he threw in a metaphor of his own to combat its effects: 'Their pitiful

¹ For more on the use of such language in his works see: Laurence Dickey, 'Power Commerce, and Natural Law in Daniel Defoe's Political Writings 1698-1707', in, John Robertson, ed., *A Union for Empire* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 63-96

² [Lord Belhaven], *A Scots Answer to a British Vision* [Edinburgh, 1706]

Blunder Pass for Lightening and Thunder'.¹ Where he made his mistake was his assumption that the 'Rhime flow'd from the North' because specifically Scottish words such as 'Frith' (estuary) and 'wood' (mad) had been used.² Defoe was clearly delighted with this misidentification of authorship, and lost no time in replying to Belhaven with *A Reply to the Scots Answer, to the British Vision* (1706) which poked more linguistical fun at Belhaven's oratory, poetry and general writing style. Unlike his previous work which was rich in simile, albeit similes that provided a mirror image to those which his adversary created, this effusion was rich with metaphor, building up the position of Belhaven, only for him to burst the bubble with incompatible imagery, reducing his target to a laughing stock. This shift in size was evident even in the first line of the work, 'Hail noble Lord of Parts Immense', played on the duality of being both a man possessed of excellent qualities, but at the same time being physically blessed.³ Throughout the poem, Defoe consistently referred to the Scotsman's language, and even went as far as to mention his 'Ciceronian Eloquence', but only so that he could reduce this image in the next line to an incomprehensible utterance that no one could understand. The style and grammar of Belhaven also came under Defoe's scrutiny:

Thus for thy Prose the Crowd thy Praise rehearse,
But who shall rate the Wonders of thy Verse;
For when thou stoop'st to Poesie and Rhime
Tis all incomprehensibly Sublime;
Supream in Thought, to Grammar unconfin'd;
Thy lofty Genius soars above the Wind. (ll. 14-19)⁴

It is notable that Defoe was under no illusion here as to which group the original speech was intended – the crowd, which he deployed here in a base manner in order to contrast it

¹ Ibid.,

² Macaree, 'The Flyting of Daniel Defoe and Lord Belhaven', p. 73

³ [Daniel Defoe], *A Reply to the Scots Answer, To the British Vision* [Edinburgh, 1706]

⁴ Ibid.,

with sublime poetry. He then proceeded to physically lower and lift the reach of the rhetoric by using such words as, 'stoop'st' and 'lofty', which indicates the fall and rise of the poem's cadences. There are also several points of interest these lines, which all revolve around literary critical practices. First of all Defoe used this as an opportunity to poke fun at both Belhaven's prose and poetic style by intimating that they are equally incomprehensible. Furthermore his depiction of Belhaven as man unconfined by grammar would have struck at the heart of a rhetorician's ability. For in this period, grammar was still one of the key principles of rhetoric, which had yet to be divorced from it and superseded by the belletristic notions of taste and polite composition which men such as Adam Smith and Hugh Blair would go on to advocate. As a man schooled in a dissenting academy by Charles Morton, Defoe would have been perfectly aware of the need to display a correct grammar and style, and so by attacking this element of Belhaven's speech he denigrated his craft still further. Juxtaposed to this technical critique of his opponent's oration, Defoe also incorporated an attack on the aesthetic quality of the speech and the poem. Having established that the incorrect grammar reduced the quality of the work, he then went on to dismiss their art, by implying that the images themselves would appear disjointed and confused. As a consequence, neither the argument nor its visual representation would fly for Belhaven.

Ironically in his *Review* Defoe acknowledged that he himself did not possess a correct style or grammar which he used as the lynchpin of his writing style. In one of the first editions of his new journal he stated:

Those Gentlemen who are Criticks in Stile, in Method
or Manner, be angry that I have never pull'd off my Cap
to them in humble Excuse for my loose Way of treating
the World as to Language, Expression, and Politeness of

Phrase; Matters of this Nature differ from most things a Man can write: When I am busied writing Essays, and Matters of Science, I shall address them for their Aid, and take as much Care to avoid their Displeasure as becomes me; but when I am upon the Subject of Trade, and the Variety of Casual Story, I think my self a little loose from the Bonds of Cadence and Perfection of Stile, and falsifie my self in my Study to be explicit, easie, free, and very plain; and for all the rest, *Nec Careo, nec Curo*.¹

Defoe actually hit upon the very style which was necessary in a journal whose goal it was to inform as broad a readership as possible; and that was to keep the message as simple as possible. In this regard, he is no different from the pulpit orator of the later eighteenth century, or the lawyers writing their works on the eloquence of the bar. His religious upbringing at the hands of Puritan parents would certainly have augmented this desire for simplicity. It would also seem however, that there was more than a hint of modesty in Defoe's account, for as his prolific writings abilities demonstrated, he was more than capable of adapting and altering his writing style.² Furthermore, the fact that Defoe was taking critical appreciation into consideration by attempting to assuage the critics of his style, illustrates that while the journal was overwhelmingly focussed on politics and economics, literary considerations were of concern to him. William Payne has dismissed any such literary endeavour in the pages of the *Review*, and while he concedes that there are book reviews contained in its pages, the books which Defoe concerned himself with deal with economic and political problems, not with belles-lettres.³ However, Defoe was quite capable of engaging in literary criticism and did so when he provided an analysis of

¹ *Defoe's Review: In Twenty-two Facsimile Books*, ed., Arthur Wellesley Secord (22 vols., New York, 1938), I, 23

² In his praise for the extensive reach and the quality of its production, not unlike the hyperbolic praise extended to Belhaven for his speech, William Lee enthused: 'many passages, both of prose and verse, which, for fineness of wit, delicacy of expression, force of morality, and historical value, are not to be surpassed in the whole range of English literature'. William Lee, *Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings* (3vols., London, 1869), I, p. 85

³ *The Best of Defoe's Review: An Anthology*, ed., William L. Payne (New York, 1951), p. xix

the poems and plays of Sir Charles Sedley.¹ In 1717 he even wrote in an essay on the dangers of the High-Church that ‘good Literature’ had always been his desire, in writing.² While it would be folly indeed to suggest that the *Review* in some way resembled the *Spectator*, Defoe’s journal did frequently have recourse to literary matters. In particular the ‘Advice from the Scandal Club’ often included poems, both in English and in Latin, critical remarks on literature and sermon style, and above all, it took a great interest in the language of the country.³

This linguistic misunderstanding was a common ploy of Defoe’s in the Union debates. He would often undermine his opponents by reducing the opposition against him to nothing more than literary confusion. In his *An Essay, at removing national prejudices, against a Union with England Part III* (1706) he even suggested that his adversaries did not fully understand what was meant by the terms ‘incorporating’ and ‘Union’. He stated that those who had a problem with the terminology, ‘would do very well to turn to their Books, and putting together all the Etymologies, receiv’d Significations, customary

¹ Daniel Defoe, ‘Some Account of the Life of Sir Charles Sedley’, in, William Ayloffe, ed., *The Works of the Honourable Sir Charles Sedley* (2 vols., London, 1722), I, pp. 6-8

² Daniel Defoe, *Faction in Power: or, the mischiefs and dangers of a High-Church Magistracy* (London, 1717), p. 56

³ The Advice from the Scandal Club provided numerous literary critical observations, even within the first few months of its publication. Among some of the literary concepts debated in its pages were the beauties and cadence in speech, the correct application of rhyme and verse, and the rules for authors who wish to augment their works with quotes from another writer. The *Review* Tuesday, May, 9th, 1704 contains an interesting take on the English language. Reporting on a sermon recently printed under title of *Plain English* the club were asked to air their opinion over the complaint that it was a ‘harsh, unpleasant, and very unsuitable style’. The club noted that the society for reformation, who had desired this sermon, could not bear plain English. Although this is a humorous anecdote it serves to reinforce the concept that Defoe himself was an advocate of a plain and simple style, no matter in what medium a person was writing or speaking. While Defoe was happy to have a plain English style, he rejected the idea of a pure English language. This was an unusual thing for him to do because the creation of such a style would have been a great aid in asserting a national identity. See: Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London, 1960), pp. 67-73. This may not be such a conundrum if one considers that Defoe wrote at the time of the forging of a new national identity, and just as a common religion could present problems with regard to integration, so too would the imposition of a new language on both Union partners. In this scenario, it would not be only Scotland which was affected. The counties of northern England, and any area which did not speak the correct form of English would be excluded from this new unity.

Acceptations, and common reading of the words *Union* and *Incorporation*, tell us what they understand by them'.¹ To make his position absolutely clear, he then proceeded to embark on a lengthy simile where the Union was compared to a body receiving food: which once it had been fully united and digested provided the necessary nutriments to instil into the body, life and vigour. One of Defoe's opponents, the Reverend James Clark, a minister at the Tron in Glasgow deployed a similar technique when dealing with the Englishman's own writings. Commenting on Defoe's representation of the riots in Glasgow, Clark took particular offence at Defoe's misrepresentation of the events, commenting, 'It seems Mr. Defoe hath forgotten his Logics, to distinguish betwixt a *causa per se* and a *causa per accidens*'.² This misunderstanding had a more sinister edge to it for Clark, because he went on to expand his point to incorporate misrepresentation of the facts on the part of Defoe. 'I cannot pass to notice Mr. Defoe's Paralogistick way of Tacking together Sentences,' complained Clark, 'spoken at different and distant Periods by his Legerdemain the more plausible to set off his Misrepresentation of me... After he makes me speak his Words, Addresses will not do'.³ This attack on Defoe's historical abilities went a stage beyond the attacks on his poems. For the poetry which Defoe wrote to combat his adversaries in the Union debates were examples of flyting, merrymaking, and wit, but his history was a serious endeavour which attempted to provide an

¹ Daniel Defoe, *An Essay, at removing national prejudices, against a Union with England Part III* ([Edinburgh], 1706), p. 6. The third part of this series was the first one to address the Scots specifically. The first two had been written in England and were directed at an English audience. Both of these two works gave the impression that it was England that would stand to gain more by the Union. The first two parts, unlike all their successors also make no differentiation between British interests and English interests.

² James Clark, *A Just Reprimand to Daniel Defoe. In a letter to a Gentleman in South Britain* (Edinburgh, [1709]), p. 3

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3 Clark objected to the history in general because he was 'an Author who Writes for Bread', this was a problem because it was, 'an Errour to encourage Mercenarie Pens, to Write Histories, for such are in manifest hazard of being bypassed and bribed to write partially'. *Ibid.*, p. 7

authoritative account, albeit a Whig account, of the events which led to the Union.

Clark's criticisms therefore work on two levels, because on one hand they tackle the problem of literary misunderstanding which Defoe was apt to accuse his opponents of doing, but on the other they addressed a more fundamental point concerning his ability to represent the truth of the events he witnessed. Clark ultimately dismissed Defoe's critical method by labelling him, a Thrasonick Zoilus (the critic of antiquity who had berated Homer for his poor quality verse) and added a motto which demonstrated his opinion of his lowly status: '*Est mihi Penna loquax Bacchus et Alma Ceres*'.¹ As a result of his questionable motives, owing to reparations the he would receive for the work, Clark considered what he had written here, and all his works in general, to be little more than 'mythologies' that had no bearing on the truth of the matter. This would actually appear to be a consistent factor in Defoe's writing in general. It is notable that Defoe insisted all his fiction was actually fact. In his preface to *Robinson Crusoe* he stated:

The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatch'd, that the Improvement of it, as well to the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same; and as such, he thinks without farther Compliment to the World, he does them a great Service in the Publication.²

He would not even claim authorship of the piece, for it would cast immediate doubt upon the authenticity of the work. However, Defoe's actions need to be taken in context of early eighteenth century thoughts on literature. In this period, the infiltration of romances,

¹ Clark's translation of this line was: 'To get my Bread no other way I ken, / But by the Clatters of my Tongue and Pen'. Clark, *Paper Concerning Defoe*, p. 7. Clark built upon this idea of a mercenary writer not fit to write histories from the writer David Jones who had recently written a history of European affairs, and had remarked to the effect that an author who wrote for bread would live by defamation. David Jones, *A Compleat History of Europe: Or, A View of the Affairs thereof, Civil and Military: From the Beginning of the Treaty of Nimeguen, 1676 To the End of the Year, 1700* (London, 1705), Preface

² Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner* (London, 1719), preface, p. 2

based on continental influences had pervaded British society, and the great concern that people had was over the potential force of these productions to damage the minds of young people. By referring to his novel as a history, and maintaining that it was designed for the improvement of the reader, Defoe attempted to reduce the criticism that would be levelled at him for writing in this genre. This in turn creates a two way interaction between history and truth in this type of literature. By presenting truth as a form of history Defoe attempted to enshrine the value of his work, while at the same time by presenting history as a form of truth he gave credence to the format in which he chose to write his novel. As the lines of history and truth became blurred through Defoe's vision, protests grew around prose fiction, that it too was in effect a lie, and in fact a dangerous deception.¹ There is a parallel to be drawn here with the way Defoe treated real history and fictive history.² For it would appear from the criticisms of Clark that Defoe appeared to be promulgating this lie in his actual histories, and even though he was writing years before his fiction was published, the Scots minister would also have included these works as mythologies.

While Defoe's poetic attacks on Belhaven were lampoons of sorts, his *Caledonia* (1707) and *True-Born Britain* (1707), were both substantial attempts at sustained poetry. Indeed *Caledonia* showed a distinct appreciation for Scotland and the Scots, always taking care to offset the problems which the nation faced with economic solutions to their plight within the framework of the British state. Despite the fact that Defoe wrote to

¹ Backscheider argues that Defoe, 'used historical and social actuality to create illusion rather than to render accurately or artificially and, by doing so, redefined art and referential truth'. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe*, p. 9

² For the links between history and poetry in the fiction of the eighteenth century see: Keith Stewart, 'History, Poetry, and the Terms of Fiction in the Eighteenth Century', *Modern Philology* 66 (1968), pp. 110-120; Keith Stewart, 'Ancient Poetry as History in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19 (1958), pp. 335-347

Harley and claimed to him that he had designed *Caledonia* to fool the Scots into thinking that he was going to settle there, the poem is carefully crafted and demonstrates an appreciation for the country and its people.¹ The poem still retained an element of the conflict between economic and martial values. In effect Defoe put forward the longest purse, versus the longest sword debate. Unlike those in the pro-Union camp who argued that Scotland had remained the only unconquered nation in Europe, Defoe believed that Scotland's liberty had long ago evaporated as the nation sunk further and further into poverty. However, he believed there was a chance for them if they would but join with the English in Union, for this would not only permit them to regain their liberty which was the birthright of every British citizen, but it would also open up the heretofore untapped resources of Scotland, waiting to be exploited in commercial markets, and which could restore the nation's wealth and prestige.² By doing this he could pander to the Scots' pride in their martial heritage, but also remind them that this glory had no practical benefit, because in European terms they lacked the finances to be a real force. The remedy for this was clear. A Union with England would provide the Scots not only with an opportunity to redress this balance, but it would permit them to express their martial values with the bonus that this time they could profit from it. In the case of *The True-Born Britain* (1707), Defoe restored the martial prowess of Scotland, but here he dressed it in British robes. While he was happy to side-step this issue in his

¹ *Letters of Daniel Defoe*, p. 141

² Daniel Defoe, *Caledonia: A Poem in Honour of Scotland, and the Scots nation. In Three Parts* (Edinburgh, 1706). In an early poem *True-Born Englishman A Satyr* (1701) Defoe actually permitted Scotland to lay claim to a more ancient heritage than the English. 'Even Scotland too her Elder Glory show, / Her Gourdots, Hamiltons, and her Monries; / Douglas, Mackays, and Grahams, Names well known / Long before Ancient England new her own'. p. 8

disagreements with Belhaven, it provided a vital unifying strand when trying to foster a British identity to compete in imperial competition with France:

Our Lineage we derive from ancient *Brute*,
A famous Gen'ral in the Wars of Troy,
And by Descent his Martial Fire enjoy,
To the Dread and Terror of those sawcy foes,
Who durst the Balance, we prescribe, oppose. (ll. 10-14)¹

This poem could only have come after the Union was effectively secured owing to the fashion in which the poet is able to reconcile these martial differences under one common heritage. For the appeal to the martial nature was one of the strongest rhetorical practices deployed by the Country party in order to garner support. James Clark's *Scotland's Speech to her Sons* (1706) is typical of such productions. Clark, who was no stranger to bandying words with Defoe, was a vociferous anti-Union campaigner and preached many sermons against it in the pulpit. Clark's language is comparable to Belhaven's, referring time and again to the 'Ancient Honour and Glory' and the 'independent sovereignty' of the country, stripped bare by the machinations of the English. A frequent ploy of the Country party and its allies was to establish the time-honoured belief that Scotland had through its courage and skill, put boundaries to the Roman Empire. Clark attempted to fire the indignation of his readers by stating, 'Roman Arms could never do what English craft and Scots silliness have done'. He even threw in the Latin motto, '*Imperii fuerat Romani Scotia Limes*', for which he provided his own translation.² There is also the lingering image of Mother Caledonia present in the oration, not quite waiting to be

¹ Daniel Defoe, *The True-born Britain. Written by the author of the True-born Englishman* (London, 1707), p. 1

² Clark's translation, and embellishment was, 'Scotland of Old Rome's Arms did Bound, / None but Scotsmen can Scotland Wound'. He continued the martial metaphor right until the end of his speech where he portrayed the country as, 'poor, bleeding, and sinking', suffering from wounds not just inflicted by the English, but by its own countrymen. [James Clark] *Scotland's Speech to her Sons* [Edinburgh, 1706]

murdered as Belhaven had her, but nonetheless badly beaten. Her sufferings resulted from a combination of avarice and greed which were inflamed by the insatiable passions of men, according to Clark. Contained within this martial heritage was the concept that Scotland had been bought and sold for English gold, and even though he did not use the phrase now so firmly associated with Robert Burns, nevertheless the sentiments were apparent not only here, but in a multitude of anti-Union tracts.

The English Baron, and controversial orator, John Thompson, Lord Haversham, (1648-1710) was, like Fletcher, also an advocate of the Federal system of Union. Haversham was concerned that the influx of a disproportionate number of Scots into a newly formed British parliament would destabilise the English constitution, which according to him was the most perfectly balanced governmental system in the world.¹ He established an extended metaphor which depicted the two countries as a collection of mismatched pieces, which if joined together would be so fragile as to break apart upon the first test of its sturdiness. He built upon this metaphor by citing a simile which Francis Bacon deployed on the corollary of such a Union. 'A Unity, that is piec'd up by a direct Admission of Contraries in the Fundamental Points of it is like the Toes of Nebuchadnezar's Image, which were made of Iron and Clay; they may cleave together, but can never incorporate'.² Haversham ultimately deployed classical allusions in the same way that Belhaven did in his published speeches, however, the tone of the English Lord's are firmly aimed at those in the parliament, which is reinforced by his sophisticated building and linking of images, and his layering of similes upon metaphors, as opposed to the Scottish Lord's appeal to the masses, who were literate but not literary

¹ Lord Haversham, *The Lord Haversham's Speech in the House of Peers, on Saturday, February 15 1707* [Edinburgh, 1707], p. 2

² Francis Bacon, quoted in, Haversham, *Speech February 15 1707*, p. 2

inclined, and so therefore had to contain a less elaborate chain of linguistic allusions.¹

Like Belhaven, Haversham also became embroiled in a small pamphlet war with Defoe in 1705 after he published a speech in parliament where he attacked the government for its conduct in the War of Spanish succession. Defoe announced that as the speech had entered the public domain, it was a legitimate target for criticism. Haversham, clearly stung by Defoe's words responded with a vindication of his speech, answering point by point the criticisms which Defoe had made.² Haversham's ability to make speeches which played well with the public was something which left him open to the attacks of satirists in exactly the same way that Belhaven had. The anonymous poem, *The Dog in the Wheel* (1705) attacked him for both his speech making abilities, as well as alleging his frequent recourse to prostitutes.³

In order to publish such a wide range of pamphlets in the lead up to the Union a number of printing presses were required in Scotland, and even here there were divisions over the political affiliation of those printers. An anonymous critic of the period lamented that, 'there were only two respectable printing-presses, both belonging to keen Jacobites, in [Edinburgh]; the other booksellers were Presbyterians who printed atrociously'.⁴ The

¹ Haversham also displayed an impressive level of understanding in the nuances of the Treaty over the role of heritable jurisdictions. While it has been common to dismiss the English ministers' lack of knowledge of these feudal rites, Haversham investigated the problem of these in a rhetorical inquisition. 'I rather take notice of these, because though the Articles of Union are ratified by the Scotch Parliament, yet the Bulk and Body of that Nation seem to be against them [Articles 20 and 21]. Have not the Murmurs of the People there been so loud as to fill the whole Nation? And so bold too, as to reach even to the Doors of the Parliament? Has not the Parliament itself thought fit to suspend their beloved Clause in their Act of Security, for arming their People during their Session?' *Ibid.*, p. 3

² [Lord Haversham], *The Lord Haversham's Speech in Parliament, November 15 1705* [London, 1705]; Daniel Defoe, *An Answer to the L—d H-----sham's Speech* [London, 1705]; Lord Haversham, *The Lord Haversham's vindication of his Speech in Parliament, November 15 1705* [London, 1705]. In this pamphlet Haversham picked up on the image of Defoe as a hired pen, calling him, 'a mean and mercenary prostitute', p. 1. For a complete collection of his published speeches see: John Thompson, *Some Memoirs of the late Right Honourable John Lord Haversham from the years 1640-1710* (London, 1711)

³ Anon., *The Dog in the Wheel: A Satyr* (London, 1705)

⁴ Quoted in, Henry Grey Graham, *Scottish Men of Letters in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1908), p. 10

most prominent of these printers was James Watson (1664?-1722). Watson had previously been in trouble with the authorities for publishing an incendiary pamphlet entitled, *The People of Scotland's Groans and Lamentable Complaint Pour'd out before the High Court of Parliament* (1700) which heavily criticised the English over their role in the Darien disaster. Despite having to answer for this, Watson sailed close to perilous waters again with the publication of Alexander Penicuik's, *A Pill for the Pork Eaters, or a Scots lancet for an English Swelling* (1705), which also had much to say about Darien, among other complaints. Predictably the military heroes of Scotland's past were invoked, as well as the battle of Bannockburn:

Our Country, now oppres'd, shall then produce
 Hero's, like DOUGLASS, WALLACE and the BRUCE.
 Who England's Insolencies dare chastise,
 When Scotland's *Liberties* shall be the prize.¹

Watson is most famous, however, for publishing his *Choice Collection* (1706). The *Collection* is a statement about preserving the 'Native Scots Dialect', by means of literary appreciation. Although Watson's preface appears apologetic about the perceived performance of his collection, this was most likely a humble plea to potential buyers of the work, and therefore an economic consideration, rather than a belief in the inferiority of the product. One need only look to the pamphlets that Watson did put his name to, in order to observe that he was no shrinking violet.² There is a more assured literary identity encapsulated in the poems of this edition than is apparent in the Union pamphlets.³ For Watson's choice reaches deep into the past of Scots culture, to locate poetic kings as well

¹ [Alexander Penicuik], *A Pill for the Pork Eaters, or a Scots lancet for an English Swelling* (Edinburgh, 1705), p. 9

² *James Watson's Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems both Ancient and Modern* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1977), I, vii-viii

³ Ian S. Ross & S. A. C. Scobie, 'Patriotic Publishing as a Response to the Union', in, T. I. Rae ed., *The Union of 1707: Its Impact on Scotland* (London, 1974), pp. 97-103

as to promote men such as Alexander Montgomerie and William Drummond. On a political level, according to Christopher Whatley, he captured, ‘the everyday speech patterns of ordinary Scots for the anti-Union cause and subsequently, popular Jacobitism’.¹ The publication date of the *Collection* would reinforce this belief that Watson’s motives were just as much politically inspired as they were literary. While this literary production offered a more sophisticated expression of identity, the pamphleteers stuck to the traditional hunting grounds for their works. The standard rhetorical tropes were wheeled out by the defenders of Scottish liberty, determined to keep the proud heritage of Scotland independent and untainted.² In much the same vein as *A Pill for the Pork Eaters* was *The Generous and Noble Speech of William Wallace of Elderslie at the Battle of Falkirk* (?1707). The tone of this speech indicates the failure of the anti-Union movement, presented through the defiant words of Wallace proclaiming that he would rather succumb to death in order to preserve his liberty than to live in slavery. Also printed with the speech were two fables translated out of Aesop depicting the alliance of two parties which ultimately resulted in the destruction of one of the protagonists.³

The posturing of Scottish liberty and independence was savaged by the arch-critic of Scotland’s constitutional status William Atwood. Such was the hatred for his work *The Superiority and direct dominion of the Imperial Crown of England, over the Crown and*

¹ Whatley, *Scots and the Union*, p. 12. See also: Murray Pittock, *The Myth of the Jacobite Clans* (Edinburgh, 1995), pp. 105-110

² In the aftermath of the Act of Security, Caledonia was also personified as a warrior queen, akin to Athena, who has been bloodied but not bowed by the English. Liberty paid for in blood to stop slavery is the main theme of his poem. William Forbes, *The True Scots Genius Reviving: A Poem Written upon occasion of the resolve past in parliament 17th July 1704* ([Edinburgh], 1704)

³ Anon., *The Generous and Noble Speech of William Wallace of Elderslie at the Battle of Falkirk* [?Edinburgh, ?1707]

Kingdom of Scotland (1704) that it was ordered to be burned in Scotland.¹ Atwood's claim that the Crown of Scotland had always been subordinate to its English counterpart, had to be dismantled, otherwise the Scottish justification of two independent kingdoms joining together as one, would instead be perceived as the incorporation of a province into its parent state. Therefore, Atwood's claims drew criticism not only from the anti-Unionists, but also from the Unionists, including men such as Seton and Cromarty, who believed in the independence of the Scottish nation.²

Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, who was both a member of the parliament and an antiquarian, had conducted extensive research into Scotland's history and he was fully aware of the nuances of the independence arguments which the anti-Unionist faction had advanced. However Clerk believed that to retain such independence while the country was in a destitute state amounted to a very poor exchange in order to preserve its undiluted liberty. One must remember that Clerk was effectively in the employ of Queensberry in this period, owing to debts that he had accrued on his grand tour, and at least initially he appeared to be lukewarm to the pro-Union faction. Nevertheless, Clerk was more than just a hired gun, and he provided several important arguments to advance the cause of the Unionists. As with Defoe, Clerk was acutely aware of the economic benefits that Scotland had the potential to take advantage of if it joined in an

¹ [William Atwood], *The Superiority and Direct Dominion of the Imperial Crown of England, over the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland, and the Divine Right of Succession* (London, 1704)

² For those in the pro-Union camp who asserted the independence of Scotland as an ancient kingdom see: [William Seaton], *Scotland's Great Advantages by an Union with England: shoven in a Letter from the Country* ([Edinburgh], 1706), p. 10; [Earl of Cromarty], *An Abstract of what was spoke in parliament by E. C.* ([Edinburgh], 1705), pp.4-5. For the anti-Unionists who spoke against it see: [James Hodges], *War betwixt the Two British Kingdoms considered* (London, 1705), pp. 11-12; *The Lord Belhaven's Speech in Parliament the 17th July 1705*. Atwood also published in response to some of these criticisms. William Atwood, *The Superiority and Direct Dominion of the Imperial Crown and Kingdom of Scotland... Reasserted* (London, 1705); William Atwood, *The Scotch Patriot Unmasked* (London, 1705). For a discussion of the implications of Atwood's assertions and the Scots' attempts to refute them see: Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 45-49

incorporating union. For him, the present situation was untenable owing to the poverty of the nation. 'It is very well known, that many of us live with difficulty, and many thousands of our nearest Relations, are obliged to leave their Country, for want of Bread and Employment'.¹ Clearly a country which was haemorrhaging its population was not one which could crow about its liberty. Nevertheless Clerk was at pains to address the concerns that had frequented the pamphlets in the period. He conceived of the arrangement between the two as a marriage which would ultimately be beneficial to both partners:

We have the Honour indeed to pretend to *Chastity*, (as some call it) having never been Conquered; but this should serve only to entice us to imitate the Conduct of a chaste Virgin, who, because she fears her own Weakness, and want of Resolution to continue long in that Condition, prudently enters into Wedlock; by which sort of Union, she acquires indeed the Name of being one Flesh with her Husband, yet at the same time, she remains that very numerical Honourable Person that she was before.²

Clerk apologised for this extended simile, but it did not stop him from adding in a couple more in order to secure his point. Iain Brown has argued that owing to his love of poetry, music, history and architecture, among other interests, Clerk ought to be considered as one of Scotland's foremost virtuosi. Indeed one of his poetic efforts, 'The Country Seat' (1727), although unpublished, was regarded by those who read it as something of a national manifesto of taste.³ Therefore it is entirely probable that Clerk's style was influenced by his love of the fine arts. It is also possible that Clerk was attempting to

¹ Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, *A Letter to a Friend giving an Account of how the Treaty of Union has been received here* (Edinburgh, 1706), p. 6

² *Ibid.*, p. 9

³ Iain G. Brown, 'Modern Rome and Ancient Caledonia: The Union and the Politics of Scottish Culture', in, Andrew Hook, ed., *The History of Scottish Literature 1660-1800* (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 33-49. Clerk also enjoyed musical exchanges with the eminent Dutch physician Herman Boerhaave, see: P. Davidson, 'Herman Boerhaave and John Clerk of Penicuik: friendship and musical collaboration', *Proceedings of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh* 22 (1992), pp. 503-518

reduce the sting of William Wight's *The Comical Marriage of Fergusia and Heptarchus* (1706) which appeared in the same year, although Clerk's pamphlet came out in November. The tale is both highly farcical and allegorical, recounting the abuses of Fergusia (Scotland) at the hands of Heptarchus (England). Fergusia admits that she is poor but argues that she would be poorer still in a Union. When Heptarchus argues that he will protect her, she reminds him that she has been able to protect herself for over two-thousand years.¹ The story abounds in similes in order to keep the style both colourful and fast paced, while at the same time it makes a concerted effort to cover all the main grievances that Scotland would have had with England in the period, most notably Darien, but the imposition of Cromwell and the breaking of the National Covenant are also bones of contention. Despite Scotland's martial heritage, both of these sources chose to depict Scotland as the female partner in any proposed Union, although as I have mentioned previously, the Scots were also happy to depict Caledonia as a warrior queen, fighting for the nation's liberty. Although Clerk's account was more prosaic than the fantastical tale of Wight's, he continued to promote the idea of a harmonious marriage, with recourse to the Roman example. He cited the joining of the Albani and Sabini tribes in unison as the key moment in the Romans' history, as it created a stronger and more powerful group in its place.² Indeed Clerk's deep appreciation for history led to him composing his own history of the Union, which was designed to be a six volume account from ancient times until its inception.³ He was a great admirer of Daniel Defoe's *History*

¹ [William Wight], *The Comical Marriage of Fergusia and Heptarchus* ([Edinburgh], 1706)

² Clerk, *Letter*, p. 10

³ Clerk's interest in history was encouraged when he attended Leyden University. There he took 'colleges' on Roman history from the celebrated professors of Rhetoric, Jacob Perizonius and Jacob Gronovius, who had shifted their own interests away from the study of textual criticism and towards the study of antiquities. Kees Van Strien & Margaret Ahsmann, 'Scottish Law Students in Leiden at the end of the seventeenth century: The Correspondence of John Clerk 1694-1697', *Lias* 19 (1992), pp. 271-330. Clerk appreciated his

of the Union, and referred to his own work with the same title. Both men shared the same belief in an incorporating union, and both were convinced of the economic advantages to Scotland if they would join with the English.¹ They met in 1706 when Clerk was a Commissioner in London to negotiate the Treaty of Union, and throughout the years both spoke warmly of the other's literary productions.² Unlike Defoe who had written his history in the vernacular, Clerk wrote his in Latin, but he never published it. Douglas Duncan who translated the work has argued that part of the reason for this may have been down to his fear of criticism over his Latin.³ This has a certain ring of believability because when Clerk sent his short *Dissertatio de Monumentis quibusdam Romanis* to Thomas Ruddiman, the grammarian returned to him several pages of suggestions for stylistic improvement.⁴ The problem with Clerk's style in the history was his frequent recourse to grandiose eloquence, which disrupted the flow of his narrative. This demonstrates Clerk's own weakness for the Renaissance humanist style of history writing, a view which closely related history and rhetoric, and was promoted by writers such as Rapin, and deployed by historians such as Buchanan. However, historians in the

Dutch education far more than his time at Glasgow, where he felt he had to unlearn what he had learned there.

¹ Economic matters were never far from Clerk's mind when he penned Union pamphlets: [Sir John Clerk of Penicuik], *The Circumstances of Scotland consider'd, with respect to the present scarcity of money* (Edinburgh, 1705); [Sir John Clerk of Penicuik], *An Essay upon the XV Article of the Treaty of Union, wherein the difficulties that arise upon the equivalents, are fully cleared and explained* ([Edinburgh], 1706)

² Clerk praised the *True Born Englishman*, while Defoe borrowed from Clerk's 1704 pamphlet, 'An enquiry into the Roman Stylus' for his *An Essay upon Literature* (1726). For more on the links between Clerk and Defoe see: Paula R. Backscheider, 'Defoe and the Clerks of Penicuik', *Modern Philology* 84 (1987), pp. 372-381

³ Douglas Duncan, 'Introduction', in, *History of the Union of Scotland and England by Sir John Clerk of Penicuik*, trans. & ed., Douglas Duncan (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 8

⁴ As Gerard Carruthers has observed, despite Clerk's and Ruddiman's glaring political differences, both of them shared a brand of cultural nationalism in which they sought to perpetuate a traditional Scottish commitment to the classical languages and ideas of the West. Gerard Carruthers, 'James Thomson and Eighteenth Century Scottish Literary Identity', in, Richard Terry ed., *James Thomson: Essays for the Tercentenary* (Liverpool, 2000), p. 170. Iain Brown also emphasises Clerk's classical obsession. '[For him] the classical world alone provided the touchstones of art and architecture and literature, the lessons in patriotism and politics, the moral code of life'. Iain G. Brown, 'Critick in Antiquity: Sir John Clerk of Penicuik', *Antiquity* 51 (1977), p. 208

Enlightenment began to move away from this type of historical production, and a new breed began to emerge, such as Robert Wodrow who sacrificed an overly grandiloquent style in order to relate more effectively the truth of his investigations.¹ Clerk's rhetorical style is not without some merit however. Unlike Defoe's *History*, speeches formed a substantial part of Clerk's account of the Union, to which he gave critical appraisals of them in order to establish the quality of each speaker's eloquence. As a staunch pro-Unionist however, his opinion of Belhaven's oratorical efforts were less than appreciative: 'It contained all the arguments the speaker could think of to support his case, some of them forceful but many so childish that little power of mind was required to see through them'.² The fact that Clerk did not engage with any of Belhaven's points illustrates that he, like Defoe, was evasive over the power of his speech. He alluded to the internal inconsistencies and the childlike reasoning, but he did not acknowledge the influence which the speech had on the general public. Instead Clerk focused, not wrongly, on Belhaven's ambiguous stance on the Union question when he spoke to the parliament in 1701 giving the impression of his favour for the arrangement. In part, this was what the entire framework of Clerk's history was set up to do. His initial impulse to write about the history of the Union was to refute the claims of his fellow Union negotiator George Lockhart of Carnwath (1681?-1731), a prominent Jacobite whose memoirs had circulated around the country. Clerk was fiercely opposed to Lockhart's depiction of bribery and corruption ruling the day over the negotiations, so he set about producing his own version of the history to restore the balance. As a result of his

¹ Duncan, 'Introduction', p. 26. Duncan argues that the style is not simply eloquent, it actually becomes so unrestrained that Clerk indulges in rhetorical moralizing that would be absent in an English version of the history.

² Clerk, *History of the Union*, p. 121

antiquarian interests, Clerk established the roots of his history in the age when the Picts successfully defended themselves against the Romans. Rather than use their defeat as an icon of independence, Clerk proclaimed that it allowed Scotland to remain independent for almost two thousand years, whereupon they could enter into a Union with England as a free and equal partner.¹ He stressed unity wherever it had occurred in the British Isles, to such an extent, that he disposed of both Scottish and English origin myths in order to construct a myth of primeval Britishness.²

Clerk used these rhetorical tricks, in order to bolster the Whiggish rhetoric which ran through Defoe's history of the Union. However rhetorical tricks were also deployed by every protagonist in the Union debates, regardless of whether they were disseminating their ideas through the high culture of printed speeches and essays, or through the broader methods of bawdy verse, comical stories or prophetic fables. The critical responses to these forms of literature should not be viewed as belletristic rhetoric, for they were written with very specific civic goals in mind. However, the most successful pamphlet writers were men such as Defoe, who while they pretended not to understand the grammatical niceties of the argument, and stated that writing for the taste of others was not of concern to them, were able to tackle their opponents so effectively, precisely because they had a firm grasp of these rules. P. W. J. Riley was correct when he surmised that it was votes and not literature which secured the Union. However, the Union was far from inevitable, a factor of which the protagonists of the Union debates were acutely aware. As such a new critical apparatus was required to combat the arguments of each side. The Union may have been a battle ground where opponents fought over economic,

¹ This is the type of national sentiment which would express itself more fully in the nineteenth-century, See: Graeme Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860* (East Linton, 1999)

² Duncan, 'Introduction', p. 10

religious and political elements, but it was also a field where men of letters could make their mark.

CHAPTER 5: RHETORIC AND THE LAW

When modern historians examine the development of rhetoric and literary criticism it is often viewed through the narrow lens of belletristic criticism.¹ The orthodox historiography follows a distinct formula whereby rhetoric moves inexorably from oral expression through to written composition, in which the literati of Scotland, most notably Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, George Campbell and to a lesser extent Henry Home (Lord Kames), established taste at the apex of the critical pyramid, and ultimately reduced the classical elements of rhetoric to little more than support blocks.² There is a concession made to the French school of belletristic thought which traces its history back through the works of Charles Rollin, Bernard Lamy, René Rapin and ultimately to Pierre de la Ramée (Petrus Ramus), who was the first thinker in the Renaissance to decouple *inventio* and *dispositio* from the five tenets of classical rhetoric and assign them exclusively to dialectic.³ However, this retrospective imposition of a rigid belletrism onto the emerging structure of modern literary criticism leads to the exclusion of the development of rhetoric in almost all the spheres outwith university study, where the exclusive focus is on poetry, plays and the emerging literary form, the novel.⁴ Under such criteria the law

¹ For recent examples of this see: Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, (Edinburgh, 2000); Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*, (Edinburgh, 1998); Lynée Lewis Gaillet, ed., *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences* (New Jersey, 1998); Thomas P. Miller, *The Formation of College English: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the British Cultural Provinces*, (Pittsburgh, 1997).

² See, Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed., J. C. Bryce. (Oxford, 1983); Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, (3 vols., Dublin, 1783); George Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (2 vols., London, 1776); Henry Home, *Elements of Criticism*, (3 vols., London, 1762).

³ See Introduction. For an in depth discussion of Ramus's contribution to the formation of a new rhetoric see: Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Cambridge, Massachusettes, 1958). Even the great defender of the ancients Boileau can be added to this group for his observations were familiar to Blair when he wrote his works.

⁴ A good example of this type of retrospective intervention is given by Paul G. Bator over the title of Adam Smith's recently discovered lectures. The notes which were found on his lectures at Glasgow carried only this title: 'Notes of Dr Smith's Rhetorick Lectures' GUL MS Gen. 95. Bator argues, convincingly I believe, that Smith would not have termed his own lectures belles-lettres. The term itself was not widely used by English speaking peoples at this stage, and had yet to be verified in Johnson's 1755 Dictionary, which of

itself is sacrificed to fit the model of polite taste and style. This is despite the fact that two of the greatest classical influences on modern rhetoric were Cicero and Quintilian, who both wrote from the perspective of how to deploy rhetoric in order to produce the most effective speaker in civic life and in particular, how that could be practically applied to the law courts.¹ Furthermore Blair and Campbell made provision in both of their systems to address legal rhetoric and eloquence fit for the bar. Kames himself was a judge in the Court of Session, and quite apart from *Elements of Criticism* (1762), there is a wealth of material on rhetoric and eloquence in his other works, in particular, *Historical Law Tracts* (1758), and *Principles of Equity* (1760). John Ramsay of Ochertyre valued his contribution to Scottish letters so highly that he stated, '[Kames] did more to promote the interests of philosophy and *belles lettres* in Scotland than all the men of law had done for a century together'.² In more general terms, if one is to understand rhetoric in the way that eighteenth century protagonists comprehended it, then the development of rhetoric in the legal world needs to be restored to the canon of rhetoric and literary criticism. In the case of Scotland, this is especially important for three main reasons. The first is that rhetoric and *belles-lettres* play a major role in the legal thinking of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (1636-1691). Although he is primarily renowned for his legal expertise, he was also one of the premier men of Scottish letters in the seventeenth century, and the

course, Smith reviewed for the first edition of the *Edinburgh Review*. The term *belles-lettres* was added by John Lothian who discovered the lectures. See: Adam Smith, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ed., John M. Lothian (London, 1963). Paul G. Bator, 'The Formation of the Regius Chair of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres at the University of Edinburgh', *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989), pp. 40-64.

¹ For examples of how Cicero's rhetoric was received critically see: *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its medieval and early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, eds., Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (Boston, 2006); Michael von Albrecht, *Cicero's Style: A Synopsis* (Boston, 2003); C. E. W. Steel, *Cicero, Rhetoric and Empire* (Oxford, 2001). For critical reception on Quintilian see: *Quintilian and the Law: The Art of Persuasion in law and Politics*, ed., Olga Tellegen-Couperus (Leuven, 2003); Robert Anthony Kerr, *Criticism in Quintilian*, unpublished PhD. Thesis, (Glasgow, 2002); Karsten Hvidfelt Nielsen, *An Ideal Critic: Ciceronian Rhetoric and Contemporary Criticism* (New York, 1995)

² John Ramsay of Ochertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, ed., William Allardyce (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1888), I, p. 179

man generally credited with writing the first Scots novel; *Aretina; or, The Serious Romance* (1660). Second, from the 1760s onwards the majority of the literati who wrote about literary criticism at least to some degree included a discussion of legal rhetoric. Consequently, it is necessary to investigate the period before this to demonstrate that legal rhetoric was important to those who wished to understand criticism. The third reason why it is important to return legal rhetoric to the literary canon is owing to the fact that pleadings in Scotland during the eighteenth-century, and right up until 1850, were not performed orally, but were in fact submitted in writing. In this situation the written format of the law becomes a literary form in its own right, and in order to combat most effectively the pleading of an opponent, lawyers were required to formulate a practical system of criticising written pleadings.

The most apt place to start in reconciling the rhetoric of law to the new form of rhetoric which was constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century by the Scots literati is with the works of George Mackenzie. Mackenzie entered Aberdeen University in 1650, but graduated at St Andrews before moving to Bourges, an institution that was chiefly devoted to the legal profession.¹ He returned to Scotland in 1659 when he was admitted to the bar, and after the restoration, was readmitted in 1661. In the year 1660, he had taken time out from his legal studies to publish *Aretina*. The novel itself is a largely forgettable tale recounting the adventures of the two ‘knights’ Megistus and Philarites and their lovers, Agapeta and Aretina, who live in Egypt in an unspecified post-Ptolemaic period. The very few critical pieces which have appeared on the work, concern themselves mainly with the historical importance of the third book of the novel which is a thinly veiled allegorical account of the British succession from James VI to the

¹ John Calvin also attended Bourges.

restoration of 1660, which made the novel highly topical when it first appeared.¹ While both M. R. G. Spiller and Clare Jackson have written eloquently on it their main focus has been to investigate implications of the allegorical story of Scotland and England in book three in order to ascertain its importance to the political situation of the 1660s. There has been almost no attempt to locate the book in terms of its contribution to the emergence of Scottish literature, nor indeed has there been any investigation into its contribution to Scottish rhetoric. In this instance, I shall pay particularly close attention to Mackenzie's 'Apologie for Romances', which outlines his reasons for writing the novel, as well as his ideas on how romances ought to be read. In short, I will argue that he is in effect providing the reader with a short essay of literary criticism which indicates the style that such a novel should possess, and secondly, how such a literary production should be constructed.

Mackenzie's biographer, Andrew Lang, speculated that the young student may have read as many romances at university as he did law books.² While this may be a facetious remark, the 'Apologie' does demonstrate the depth of Mackenzie's reading, and the European tradition, as well as the British tradition into which he was tapping. He specifically cited Philip Sidney (1554-1586), Georges de Scudéry (1601-1667), and Roger Boyle, Baron of Broghill (1621-1679) as writers of quality romances. Of these three figures the link with Philip Sidney is the most intriguing. Sidney produced the greatest piece of literary criticism in the Renaissance period, 'An apology for poetry, or,

¹ M. R. G. Spiller, 'The First Scots Novel: Sir George Mackenzie's *Aretina* (1660)', *Scottish Literary Journal* 11 (1979), pp. 1-20. Clare Jackson, 'The Paradoxical Virtue of the Historical Romance: Sir George Mackenzie's *Aretina* (1660) and the Civil Wars', in, John R. Young, ed., *The Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1997), pp. 205-225.

² Andrew Lang, *Sir George Mackenzie King's Advocate, of Rosehaugh His Life and Times 1636(?) - 1691* (London, 1909), p. 27

The defence of poesy' (1595). The main purpose of the essay was to suggest that by combining history and philosophy together into a coherent poetic composition, it would be more effective at inspiring virtue in an individual. Spiller has remarked that Mackenzie's characters in *Aretina* were very similar to the protagonists in Sidney's *Arcadia* (1593). However, I believe that Mackenzie's critical practice exhibited in 'An Apologie for Romances' has been heavily influenced by Sidney's 'Apology for Poetry'.¹ There is more than just a similarity of title to link these two pieces. Mackenzie reiterated Sidney's point that history and philosophy combined in the literary form could produce virtuous reactions in people:

I am confident, that where Romances are written by excellent wits, and perused by intelligent Readers, that the judgement may pick more sound information from them, then from History, for the one teacheth us only what was done, and the other what should be done; and whereas Romances presents to us, vertue in its holy-day robes, History presents her only to us in these ordinary, and spotted sutes which she weares whilst she is busied in her servile, and lucrative employments: and as many would be incited to vertue and generosity, by reading in Romances, how much it hath been honoured; So contrary wise, many are deterred by historical experience from being vertuous, knowing that it hath been oftener punished then acknowledged.²

These lines are almost identical to Sidney's argument, and like Mackenzie he emphasised the vibrancy and colour that literature adds to real life over the dry and staid account of history:

Now to that which commonly is attributed to the praise of history, in respect of the notable learning which is got by marking the success, as though therein a man should see virtue exalted, and vice punished: truly, that commendation is peculiar to poetry, and far off from history; for,

¹ Spiller, 'First Scots Novel', p. 6

² Sir George Mackenzie, *Aretina; Or, the Serious Romance* (Edinburgh, 1660), pp. 6-7

indeed, poetry ever sets virtue so out in her best colours, making fortune her well-waiting handmaid, that one must needs be enamoured of her.¹

Mackenzie actually went further than Sidney over the extent to which this type of literature was superior to history. In some very poetical lines of his own he stated that, 'Romances are these vessels which strain the chrystal streams of vertue from the puddle of interest; whereas history suffers the memory to quaff them of the mixt impurite'.² The fact that both of these writers agreed that literature could have such a positive impact on virtue is significant for two main reasons. Primarily it demonstrates that in Scotland, and in England before the 1760s when the literati of Scotland were credited with creating the scholarly discipline of literary criticism, the desire to educate individuals to be virtuous using the power of literature had already been expressed a century before. Secondly, it demonstrates that Scotland's literary critical heritage has deeper roots which feed off a pan-European tradition rather than simply reacting against the dominant English culture.³ I would go as far as to suggest that there is a shared Protestant literary heritage at work here, which can be traced back from the moderate literati and indeed from some members of the popular party of Scotland, back through Mackenzie, to Sidney and ultimately to Ramus, whose rhetoric was a great influence in Sidney's 'Apology'.⁴ Such a position is sustainable when one takes into account the literary links between figures such as Ben Jonson and William Drummond of Hawthornden, as well as the Scots' appreciation of

¹ Sir Philip Sidney, 'An Apology for Poetry, or, the Defence of Posey', ed., Geoffrey Sheppherd (Manchester, 2002), p. 25

² Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 7

³ The most famous example of this school of thought is: David Daiches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth century Experience* (London, 1964); and to a lesser extent his work, *Literature and Gentility in Scotland: The Alexander Lectures at the University of Toronto, 1980* (Edinburgh, 1982) Thomas Miller discusses how Scotland as a province of the Union reacted to pressure from the Imperial centre in order to create a viable system for criticizing literature which could also be used in the assimilation process. See Miller, *Formation of College English*.

⁴ See Chapter 6 Rhetoric and Religion

Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590).¹ Therefore, as historians and critics have begun to accept that there is a shared Protestantism in the literary influences affecting the Scots and the English, there is also a shared Protestantism which influenced literary criticism. One needs to be careful when promoting such a link, however. This shared Protestantism was enough to provide the Scots and the English with a shared cultural heritage which both could draw on when it suited them, but it was not enough to act as a glue which could bond two disparate peoples together in the aftermath of the Union.² One must also be careful about the extent to which Mackenzie should be promoted as a man of belles-lettres. Although John Dryden had labelled him, 'that Noble Wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzy', Mackenzie himself was keen to play down any such estimation.³ In his preface to the work, *Pleadings on Some Remarkable Cases* (1673), he remarked that literature was something which he had begun to turn away from: I have abandoned those Employments... the spring of my Age being past'.⁴ Andrew Lang was of course correct to state that Literature was only his second love, the first being the Law.

¹ For more on these links, and in particular on Drummond of Hawthornden's religion and politics see: Jennifer Brady, 'Jonson's Elegies of the Plague Years', *The Dalhousie Review* 65 (1985), pp. 208-230; W. Speed Hill, 'Biography, Autobiography, and Volpone', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 12 (1972), pp. 309-28; T. I. Rae, 'The Political attitudes of William Drummond of Hawthornden', in Geoffrey Wallis Stuart Barrow & Dugald MacArthur eds., *The Scottish Tradition: Essays in Honor of Ronald Gordon Cant* (Edinburgh, 1974), pp. 132-46; Guy S. Greene, 'Drummond's Borrowing from Donne', *Philological Quarterly* 11 (1932), pp. 26-38. At a more general level, David Allan's *Philosophy and Politics in Later Stuart Scotland* (East Linton, 2000) is a good general introduction to the period, which contains some in depth analysis of Drummond. There also exists a correspondence between Drummond and Jonson which was discovered by David Laing in the Advocates Library, *Extracts from the Hawthornden manuscripts: and notes by William Drummond of conversations with Ben Jonson, at Hawthornden, January 1619* (Edinburgh, 1831-2). Drummond is also of interest because like Mackenzie he attended the University of Bourges to study law. There is an account of his year there by Robert H. MacDonald, 'Drummond of Hawthornden: The Season at Bourges, 1607', *Comparative Drama* 4 (1970), pp. 89-109.

² For the debate on the extent to which Protestantism contributed to eighteenth-century British integration see: Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London, 1992); Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689-c.1830* (Cambridge, 1993); T. Claydon and I. McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity in Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998).

³ James Kinsley, ed., *Poems of John Dryden* (4 vols., Oxford, 1958), II, p. 666

⁴ George Mackenzie, *Pleadings, in some remarkable cases, before the supreme courts in Scotland, since the year, 1661. To which, the decisions are subjoyn'd* (Edinburgh, 1673), p. 1

However, he goes too far in assessing that it was only during his youth that he could find time to attain a style in literature, or to master the arts of expression.¹ On the day before his death, (May 8, 1691) he promised to his friend, Sir Robert Southwell, a copy of his manuscript 'Discourse on the First Four Chapters of the Digest, to show the Excellence and Usefulness of the Civil Law', a literary endeavour which came right at the end of his life.² In any case Mackenzie had always been plugged in to the literary activity of the country, and in 1665 he wrote that fame should be accorded to 'the Literati and the Virtuosi, or retired Curiosi'.³ The curious learning referred to the scientific realm, but his allusion to Literati was a reference to the knowledge of Latin and vernacular works, both literary and philosophical which were expected of one who would be classed under this title. This description of the skills that a member of the literati should possess was in effect almost a template for the types of skills and the works produced by the literati of the eighteenth century in Scotland, almost one hundred years before their heyday.

The influence of Ramus is clearly evident in the 'Apologie for Romances'. Mackenzie would have been exposed to his thinking when he attended King's College in 1650 as by 1647 the arts curriculum contained both Vossius's rhetoric and Ramus's dialectic.⁴ As Mackenzie has stated, simply trusting to the memory when trying to engage in an activity was no longer to be trusted, and this was a result of the growth of print culture, which had rendered the ancient art of memory almost obsolete as far as the rhetorician was concerned. It was Ramus who first argued that memory was no longer

¹ Lang, *George Mackenzie*, p. 312

² *Ibid.*, p. 183

³ George Mackenzie, 'Solitude Preferred to Publick Employment', in, *The Works of Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1716-1722), I, p. 87

⁴ James Scotland, *The History of Scottish Education: From the Beginning to 1872* (London, 1969), pp. 143, 70-71

one of the crucial factors in teaching rhetoric, and while there was still a need for a good memory, it could be improved by using outside stimuli, such as, in Mackenzie's eyes, prudently constructed romances. Mackenzie was also keen to remove invention from the rigid oratorical world, and instead argued that it could be used to promote truth and virtue. In this respect he assigned it to dialectic, and the romance novel had the potential to play a prominent role in this type of education. He argued that truth was to be found within such productions, provided that the author was himself a good man. Mackenzie lamented at the detractors who, 'condemn them [romances] as lies; but since their Authors propose them, not with an intention to deceive, they cannot properly be reputed as such: And albeit they seem but fables, yet who would unkernel them, would finde budled up in them reall truthes'.¹ There was a real attempt on Mackenzie's part to rescue the romance genre from the potential fate of existence as a luxurious and ornamental form of literature which ultimately corrupted the mind owing to its emptiness. Part of the reason that prose romances remained on the periphery of high culture was because unlike the established literary forms such as tragedy, epic and history, romances lacked a classical model. This belief in the emptiness of romances was a fate shared by rhetoric itself after Ramus had divorced it from dialectic. While Mackenzie was certainly influenced by him, he did not wholly subordinate himself to the Ramist system. One of the reasons for this may have been down to the efforts of George Buchanan, the Principal of St Leonard's College at St. Andrews University at the time when Ramist theories were beginning to grip the continent and England. He remained true to the Ciceronian system of rhetoric and in particular the works, *De Inventione* and *De Oratore* in his vision for the reform of St. Andrews. However, there may have been more personal reasons for

¹ Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 6

ignoring the ideas of Ramus, as Buchanan was a close confidant of André Gouvêa, Principal of Guyenne University at Bordeaux, and one of the principal opponents of Ramus.¹ Although he uses fables in a negative context here, the fact that there is an emphatic point to be made in the serious romance puts Mackenzie in the same position as Thomas Blackwell when he wrote about the status which fables held in modern literature. Blackwell was firmly of the opinion that the Greeks and Romans did not perceive the gods as physical beings, but as allegories and moral fables, and that each story had a specific purpose, whether it was to provide a warning to the listener, or to instil a set of virtues.² Of course, Mackenzie's belief that something akin to a fable, and more disturbingly still, something which was better at transmitting virtues than history itself, would have met with the strongest disapproval of Charles Mackie. Mackie held that truth could only be attained through the rigid application of history, and anything which was allowed to dilute this process, such as the fable, was an impediment which necessitated removal. He stated:

Truth has been justly esteem'd the soul of History, yet in all ages it has been so much corrupted [by the] fables by many writers on the subject, that imagine it may not be an improper enquiry to search into upon the grounds and reasons of upon many vulgar errors which have crept into history.³

There is a fundamental difference here between the seventeenth century man of letters and the eighteenth century proto-literary critic. Both of their outlooks were fashioned by their chosen professions however. Mackie, fascinated by history, and locked into the

¹ Alessandro Giuliani, 'The Influence of Rhetoric on the Law of Evidence and Pleading', *Juridical Review* 7 (1962), p. 249. For a brief account of his time at the university see: Paul J. McGinnis & Arthur H. Williamson eds., *George Buchanan: The Political Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1995), 1-42

² Thomas Blackwell, *Letters Concerning Mythology* (London, 1748), pp. 75-77

³ Charles Mackie, 'Lecture Read to the Philosophical Society, 4th March 1741', in, 'Notes and Lectures' EUL MSS Laing Collection, La. II 37, fol. 92

scholarly world of academia was content to permit truth, however dry it may be, to be his guiding light in the construction of an accurate history. It was Lord Kames who offered a chance at reconciling the study of law mixed with the learning power of history. He was of the opinion that law had become such a dry subject, that it was an 'intricate and crabbed science,' nevertheless if it was treated historically it had the potential to become entertaining.¹ Kames's doctrine struck a chord with James Wilson, educated at St Andrews but an emigrant to the United States and ultimately a signatory of the Declaration of Independence. When the college of Philadelphia established a law professorship in 1790 Wilson was appointed as the first professor. He subsequently delivered a series of lectures on the law where he advocated that it should be taught as a historical science. In his first lecture he established the importance of approaching the law through history and he specifically cited Kames as an example, describing him as an eminent judge, 'of men, of business, and of literature'.² Thus the application of history to the study of the law could provide entertainment not only to those whose profession it was, but also to every person who ever had a thirst for knowledge. However, as a lawyer, Mackenzie realised the practical reality that truth on its own was not enough, and needed to be dressed in appropriate finery for people to take notice of it, for the message itself to have a chance to seep into the memory of an individual. He argued that, 'albeit essayes be the choicest Pearls in the Jewel house of moral Philosophy, yet I ever thought that they were set off to the best advantage, and appeared with the greatest lustre, when they were laced upon a Romance'.³ Here Mackenzie was even prepared to make the claim that the

¹ Lord Kames, *Historical Law Tracts* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1758), I, p. xiii

² James Wilson, *The Works of James Wilson*, ed., Robert Green McCloskey (2 vols., Cambridge, Massachusettes, 1967), I, pp. 90-91

³ Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 7

moral essay, a prominent form of literary expression for the literati of the following century, was more likely to influence its audience if it was presented in this way. This is all the more surprising when one considers that literary critics of the eighteenth century, such as James Beattie and William Barron, were greatly concerned with the insidious effect that romances had on the general public, and were keen to stress the difference between high and low literature in the education of a person's individual taste. Neither man would have condoned the practice that Mackenzie advocated of mixing the two breeds, as it would in their eyes most likely have produced a specimen of inferior taste.¹ While in Britain the potential danger of romances was individual corruption, in France the perceived danger of romances, and subsequently novels, was that in imitating established literary forms, they would confuse writers to the extent that they would not be able to distinguish fact from fiction.² Nevertheless Mackenzie was not blind to the dangers which writing in this style created and he was careful to provide a caveat about how eloquence should be deployed. He stated that men were living in an age, 'wherein the appetit of mens judgements is become so queasie, that it [the mind] can relish nothing that is not either vinegared with Satyres, or suggared with Eloquence'.³ The ability of eloquence to sweeten with fine words otherwise unpalatable truths was of great concern to the ancients who felt that in the hands of the sophists rhetoric and eloquence were capable of distorting the truth, and consequently corrupting the minds of the people. However, there was an ancient precedent for refuting sophistic rhetoric: Isocrates.

¹ For more on their thoughts on the dangers of the Romance novel in contemporary society see: William Barron, *Lectures on Belles Lettres and Logic* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1806); and James Beattie, *Dissertations, Moral and Critical* (London, 1996)

² T DiPiero, *Dangerous Truths and Criminal Passions: The Evolution of the French Novel 1569-1791* (Stanford, 1992)

³ Mackenzie, *Aretina*, pp. 7-8

Isocrates was a contemporary of Plato who argued, in a fragmentary speech, *Against the Sophists*, that they taught rhetoric much in the same way that a child was taught the alphabet. Instead of being creative or inventive, a student would simply memorize passages as one would memorize letters, and could construct speeches as a child would construct words. Whereas Plato viewed rhetoric as an evil in society, and famously banned rhetoricians from his Republic, Isocrates refrained from labelling rhetoric as a corrupt art, and instead argued that rhetoric was not good or bad, only men were good or bad; and that the correct thing to do would be to take a good man and develop that goodness by using admirable models. The idea that only a good man can be a good orator was a concept which was developed by the Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian. This idea was adapted to Christian rhetoric, and was deployed most notably by the Scottish preachers William Leechman, David Fordyce and Hugh Blair, all of whom argued that the preacher who did not possess an inherent goodness would not be able to transmit the idea of goodness to his parishioners. Isocrates believed that by locating rhetoric at the core of the educational system, he could prepare citizens for civic duty, in the field of the law, the teaching of speaking and arguing would exercise the minds of advocates and invigorate their moral imagination by forcing them to make judgements which would constitute the correct course of action. Isocrates was also the first major orator, who did not solely deliver his speeches orally. As he taught at a school, they were carefully edited, polished and published. By this very action speech itself was converted into literature, and rhetoric began to metamorphosise from oral to written expression. James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1714-1799), who produced an extensive six volume work *On the Origins and Progress of Language* (1773-1792) of which volume six is

devoted to rhetoric expanded on the composition of Isocrates stating that, 'It is all composed in short detached sentences except the Preamble and the Epilogue. But even in them there is hardly anything of oratorical composition. The sentences are truly what the Latins call *sentences*... for they are artificial orations concerning morals and the conduct of life'.¹ Throughout his works Monboddo was pleased to note that they retained a pure and simple style.² In a sense Mackenzie hoped that *Aretina* would become something similar, as it deals with moral issues and the instillation of virtues into an individual through an overtly literary medium. This style is in complete harmony with the Renaissance preoccupation with discourse. The emphasis placed on the word both spoken and written, as an instrument of moral and scientific systematising led the romance writers to place in their works speeches not just from the main characters on moral dilemmas faced by the protagonists, but discourses on a variety of moral considerations such as honour, justice, war and so on.³ *Aretina* adheres to this Renaissance model, for discourses litter the narrative, so much so that at times they interfere with the narrative to the detriment of the story.

Within the story itself, Mackenzie demonstrated that learning and eloquence need not be divorced from each other. What is in fact most important, was that there was the existence of both. In describing the talents of the two main characters he wrote:

Megistus was the more learned, but Philarites was the more eloquent; yet so, as Megistus learning supplied his small want of eloquence, and Philarites eloquence made his inequality in learning with Megistus undiscernable. Thus nature seemed to teach mortals that she could cast

¹ Lord Monboddo, 'Of Isocrates', NLS MS 24565, fol. 141

² *Ibid.*, fol. 142

³ Michael Spiller, 'Urquhart and MacKenzie: Pioneers of Prose', in, David Hewitt and Michael Spiller, eds., *Literature of the North* (Aberdeen, 1983), p. 39

perfection in severall moulds, and that her Grammar did admit two Superlatives.¹

In this passage one can clearly see the lawyer in Mackenzie coming to the fore. Instead of arguing like the ancients that eloquence had the power to deceive an audience, and that the evidence of proof should be the only truth that is sufficient to persuade them, Mackenzie recognised that a far more potent combination can be achieved when erudite learning was coupled with the art of speaking. In his great work on the benefits of a studied eloquence, *An Idea of the Modern Eloquence of the Bar* (1681), Mackenzie firmly established it as a skill of paramount importance, ‘Of all the shining Accomplishments of a generous Mind, none has the Advantage of *Eloquence*, and few can pretend to equal it’.² Monboddo was of the same opinion, and believed that in order to be a great orator a practitioner must possess a great store of invention, and the understanding of a philosopher in morals; he must also possess the fire and imagination of a poet, the nature and passions of men, and the action and voice of an actor. Even with all these talents, it would still only make up a part of the orator’s armoury. Nevertheless, the benefits of eloquence were well worth the arduous study for Monboddo: ‘What study is more profitable, more useful, more honourable than the study of eloquence? What is more noble than to be able to succour the distressed, protect the innocent, defend the lives and fortunes of men?’³ However, there appears to be an internal inconsistency in Monboddo’s thought over this matter. For while he recognised the need to possess a variety of talents, including poetical talents, in order to be a lawyer, he did not conceive of rhetoric, or eloquence, in the same way that the subsequent generation of belletrists in

¹ Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 51

² George Mackenzie, *An Idea of the Modern Eloquence of the Bar* (Edinburgh, 1711), p. 1

³ Lord Monboddo, ‘Difference between Eloquence Ancient and Modern’, NLS MS 24540, fol. 21

Scotland did. Instead Monboddo adhered to the Aristotelian system of rhetoric, and he specifically stated that to employ rhetoric under any other circumstances was a great error.

I must observe a vulgar mistake among us that the art of Rhetorick is addressed to the Imagination or the Passions, a mistake which has a very bad Effect on our practice of the Art, for from hence it is that our oratorical compositions are so loaded with Epithets, bold Metaphors, Similies and other poetical Figures and that our orators paint and describe when they should reason, but the Truth is that this is but a small part of the Art and which if indiscretly used renders the composition guile, declamatory and even puerile.¹

Monboddo's reference to those who 'paint and describe when they should reason' was an attack on belletristic rhetoric which he felt detracted from the true purpose of rhetoric. He prescribed, as did Ruddiman, the study of the art of grammar, and in particular he viewed Greek grammar as the proper method for instructing rhetoric.² However, he was scathing of those, like Ruddiman who only possessed one ancient language, as he believed that in the fields of both the arts and the sciences the Romans, including Quintilian and Cicero, had produced nothing that the Greeks had not already done better. Therefore Monboddo condescended, 'a mere Latin Scholar has always appeared to me very contemptible'.³ Furthermore, without this in depth knowledge of Greek, one would be unable to fully appreciate the rhetorical prowess of the Grecian rhetoricians and Demosthenes in particular. Of paramount importance to Monboddo, was that rhetoric remained practically

¹ Lord Monboddo, 'Letter on Rhetorick', NLS MS 24504, fol.78

² For a more in depth discussion of Monboddo's views on rhetoric, as well as the full text, see: James Irvine, 'Lord Monboddo's 'Letter on Rhetorick': Defence of Aristotle', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 21 (1991), pp. 26-31. Gilbert Burnet had also advocated the learning of Greek, but not as Monboddo did for its classical impact, but for the simple reason that the bible was originally written in that language, therefore it was only right that an individual should have more than a passing acquaintance with 'the treasure of our faith'. Gilbert Burnet, *Thoughts on Education* (London, 1761), p. 55

³ Monboddo, 'Letter on Rhetorick', fol. 80

useful, and civic orientated; and one of the best forums for this type of rhetoric to continue was in the court.

Under Scots law all pleading was to be conducted by arguing syllogistically and not rhetorically, however, Mackenzie realized that judges themselves, who should be wise to the ways of rhetoric could be captivated by charming expressions and rhetorical flowers when deployed in the correct places.¹ During the 1660s when Mackenzie defended those accused of witchcraft he was also aware of the benefits which his eloquence could bring in the persuasion of judges.² This has the potential for danger in the legal system as Mackenzie's position leaves him open for the criticism that eloquence is merely empty ornament, and therefore potentially destructive in the legal sphere where the truth is sought, not the persuasion of the judge via an appeal to his emotions. Mackenzie even appeared to endorse this view when he stated, 'he who speaks last is always sure to persuade the *Audience* that he only is in the Right'.³ Nevertheless he was aware that this was a two way process. He endorsed the Ciceronian view that both sides needed to be able to argue over an issue in order to convince the judge of the truth of one of them. The proofs to which he adhered follow the classical model of truth as *argumentum*. This concept is the result of a complex development of rhetorical and dialectical theories, of which the most eloquent expression is from Cicero's *Topica* which states, '*argumentum est ratio quae rei dubiae faciat fidem*'.⁴ In the age of Cicero however, rhetoric and dialectic had not yet split and so the division which appeared in the

¹ Andrew Lang, *George Mackenzie*, pp. 319-320 'Argunning' is the term which lawyers in the seventeenth century used as 'arguing'.

² George Mackenzie, *Pleadings, in some remarkable cases, before the supreme courts in Scotland, since the year, 1661. To which, the decisions are subjoyn'd* (Edinburgh, 1673)

³ Mackenzie, *Eloquence*, p. 4

⁴ Cicero, *Topica*, ed., Tobias Reinhardt (Oxford, 2003), p. 54 'proof is a method which may make faith a thing of doubt.'

Middle Ages of dialectic representing thesis and rhetoric representing hypothesis played no part in his search for truth. Forensic rhetoric was therefore one of the key elements in ascertaining the truth in these sort of trials. Mackenzie's *Eloquence of the Bar* is thus an inheritor of this type of rhetoric which George Kennedy has termed 'technical rhetoric'.¹ That is, Mackenzie's work is a sort of handbook which advises on the most effective way to persuade an audience while still adhering to the truth through the medium of forensic rhetoric. The term forensic rhetoric does require some clarification however. To a modern readership, forensic would imply some sort of irrefutable empirical evidence which can be used by one side or the other in order to establish the truth of the matter. However, the ancients viewed forensic rhetoric in a very different light. In fact, they actively distrusted direct evidence in both criminal and civil cases owing to the fact that such proof could be faked. This was why *argumentum* was so important to them. From its Latin root the word can be translated into English in three ways, either as proof, argument or evidence.² The reliance of evidence in the modern sense was not enough on its own to secure the truth, hence the reason why the concept of *argumentum* encapsulates each idea within it. *Argumentum* allows proof to be represented in its logical aspect; it deals with what is probable, and more often that not, what is doubtful, the final judgement is regarded as what has been conditioned by proof.³ Indeed, most oratory deals with matters of probability, not certainty and under these conditions, most evidence itself comes from the realm of the probable not the scientifically demonstrable.⁴ The main point at issue here is that since Ramus divorced rhetoric and dialectic so emphatically, a concept which he

¹ George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (London, 1980), pp. 20-24

² *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed., P. G. W. Glare (Oxford, 1982)

³ Giuliani, 'The Influence of Rhetoric', p. 221

⁴ Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 21

himself had developed from the Middle Ages, rhetoric began to be viewed as a theory of decoration, without any logical force, a concept which was totally alien to the ancients, and something which Mackenzie, both in his literary endeavours and his judicial writings was at pains to correct. Where he did differ from the ancients was over the extent to which *argumentum* was the fundamental principle in ascertaining the truth. He stated:

The *Schoolmen* imagine, the *Law* is not supported by Arguments but Authorities; and consequently does not admit of any fine Reasoning at all: But they are extremely mistaken; for there is no Science in the World that allows of more different Ways of arguing about it.¹

Mackenzie, clearly viewed *argumetum* as a branch of natural philosophy, and the more opportunities for debate and discussion over an issue, the more likely for him that in the end the truth would be revealed. Therefore his ideological position on eloquence places him in an unusual position on the grounds that he conceptualized it as being both an art and an element of natural philosophy; an art by fact that one could use it to move the passions and sway the listener with gentle speech, and a part of natural philosophy by the fact that it could be used to investigate arguments which would ultimately lead to the establishment of truth. Of course, this is the world of natural philosophy before the empirical truths of Newton's *Principia*, and indeed before intellectuals in the eighteenth century had begun to refer to elements of natural philosophy as something which would go on to be recognised and referred to as a science, and one must be careful not to place Mackenzie out of his time frame. An empirical philosophy of natural philosophy was not novel however, as it was present in the tradition of classical natural philosophy, nevertheless, antiquarianism was the dominant mode of investigation in this period, and men such as Robert Sibbald (1641-1722) were much more reliant on written literary

¹ Mackenzie, *Eloquence*, p. 8

sources for their scientific information, rather than empirical study.¹ Indeed much of Scottish humanism has been studied mainly from the perspective of literature. As John W. Cairns has pointed out with regard to humanism, the role of law itself has been very little attended to, instead the focus has tended to fall on literature and is often associated with figures such as, Sibbald, Pitcairne, Mackenzie, and in the eighteenth-century, Thomas Ruddiman.² Indeed Mackenzie was less than impressed with the empirical truths of natural philosophy. He dismissed naturalists and physicists because for him, they were constantly subverting and denying each others principles, and were forced to rely on contrary experiments and uncertain conjectures.³ He was equally disparaging about logic and metaphysics, arguing that the greatest parts of them were ‘trifling’ and ‘impertinent’ and so useless and unnecessary to humane life that, ‘no person in his Right Senses will think them worth his Pains’.⁴ The ‘science’ of the lawyer was more accurate because his principles came from the ‘purest fountains of Sense and Reason, which are of excellent Use and Advantage to Mankind, and extreamly necessary to humane Life’.⁵ The fact that this was a science which had a direct benefit to the public was the main issue at stake for Mackenzie. He was not a man to concern himself with trifles, and anything which had a claim to be a science was required by him to have a practical application in civic life. This reinforces his position over the form of the novel. While others were lamenting its corrupting influence, Mackenzie was of the opinion that if used for good, it had the

¹ For more on the development of science in the seventeenth century see: Stan A. Mendyk, *Speculum Britanniae: Regional Study, Antiquarianism and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto, 1989)

² John W. Cairns, ‘The Formation of the Scottish Legal Mind in the eighteenth century: Themes of Humanism and Enlightenment in the Admission of Advocates’, in, Neil MacCormick & Peter Birks, eds., *The Legal Mind: Essays for Tony Honore* (Oxford, 1986), p. 258

³ Mackenzie, *Eloquence*, p. 9

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10

potential not only to transmit virtuous qualities into a receptive audience, but that it would have a collective benefit to society as a whole.

Mackenzie was deeply concerned about how such arguments should be delivered to both the reader and the auditor. For a man of extensive classical learning he adopted a practical position over the language which ought to be employed in the expression of ideas. For the purposes of romances he believed that the constant recourse to Latin and Greek was destructive, not only in the creative process, but also in the reception by an audience:

There are those who embroider their discourse with Latin and Greek termes, thinking, like these who are charmers, that the charme loses its energie, if the words are not used in Latine. But this is as ridiculous, as if one who desires to make his face seem pleasant, should enamble it with red, blew, green and other colours.¹

In this vivid description, Mackenzie demonstrated that despite his adherence to the classical languages as the most worthy forms of expression, it was not always appropriate to use them as models for imitation. The most important thing for a writer or orator was for his intended audience to understand him. This desire for clarity of thought was something which was of paramount importance for the literati of the Enlightenment. Whether it was Hugh Blair at Edinburgh, William Leechman at Glasgow, or even further a field, John Witherspoon in the colonies, all of whom were of the united opinion that the orator should take pains to speak in a language which would be understood by all. In the case of Hugh Blair, this was in direct opposition to those who view him as only an anglicising critic. While Blair's ultimate goal was for the study of English literature to assist Scots in their quest to speak in a refined English manner, he was aware that in

¹ Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 9

practice the job of an orator was to speak in a simple and unpretentious manner to an audience in a language which they could understand, and in the eighteenth century this language would have been Scots.¹ However, just as one should not overplay Blair's love of the vernacular, neither should one assign the position of the defender of vernacular works to Mackenzie. Although he did not have the same problem with Scotticisms which affected his fellow countrymen almost a century later, it is significant that his main foray into literature should be in English. Indeed the subheading of the title page of the novel states: 'Written originally in English'.² For Mackenzie though, there is no issue over the language in which he chose to write. As a man comfortable in Scots, English, French and Latin, he simply selected the most appropriate medium for himself in order to reach the widest audience.

This same desire for clarity pervaded his thinking on the style appropriate for his novel. The frequent recourse to Latin was for Mackenzie, 'an university style, which savours too much its pendant, and is at best but bastard oratory, seing the scope of all orators is to perswade, and there can be no perswasion where the term is not understood'.³ This was the first of three styles which he identified as being unsuitable for the romance format, but which, nevertheless, in their own sphere were correct and useful. The second style which he investigated was that of moral philosophers. In this style the periods were short, and the sense was strong. This was a benefit for the reader because the shorter that something was, the stronger it would be. This style was most apt for the

¹ Blair, *Lectures*, II, p. 297. There has been some recent scholarship which has sought to reorient Blair from the pedantic anglicizing critic, and instead place him in the wider context of Scottish literary criticism, which among other things, addresses traditional criticism of Blair which pits him against the vernacular poetic talents of Robert Burns. See, Liam McIlvanney, 'Hugh Blair, Robert Burns and the Invention of Scottish Literature', *Eighteenth-century Life* 29 (2005), pp. 25-46; Ralph R. McLean, 'Burns, Blair, and the Holy Fair', *The Burns Chronicle* (2006) pp.21-23

² Mackenzie, *Aretina*, p. 1

³ *Ibid.*, p. 9

preachers in Mackenzie's eyes because if the sentences should be too weighty, then they would become a burden to the hearers, and the preacher should take care not to overload his audience with too much information.¹ The third style which he explored was that of the barristers. This style flourished with similes, and long winded periods, however he considered it the most preferable because, according to him, similitude was but a harmony, and a style adept at showing this excellent harmony, and the rapport which God intended in the first creation.² The selection of the correct style was therefore as important as selecting the correct language for publication and this same reasoning was behind his decision to publish his *Eloquence of the Bar* in Latin. Mackenzie stated:

Books that are written in our native Tongue, while they are yet new, are nipt by Envy in the tender Bud; and when they are grown older, and have surviv'd the Malice of our Contemporaries, our fleeting Language instantly disappears, and intirely abandons them to eternal Oblivion.³

So, it is not just the Scots language that is unfit as a means of recording works for posterity, but all vernacular languages which if they are altered, or disappear, will render the art of creation inert. Only by writing in the learned, and in Mackenzie's age, universal language of Latin could one hope to leave their works to the ages, and he admitted as much in print:

These Considerations have induc'd me to write my pleadings in the Latin Tongue, that just and faithful Repository of Fame, which never loses those things that are committed to its Care, and instead of lessening the Sense of an Author, (if he has any)

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. This is a notion which the preachers Blair, Fordyce, and Leechman all subscribed to and they were at pains to point out the benefits of short periods. However, not one of them made the allusion that Mackenzie did that the shortness of the periods, appropriate for the pulpit was similar to the moral philosophy essay.

² *Ibid.*, p. 10. Mackenzie's argument that similitude is but a harmony places him very close to the Hutchesonian concept of harmony. However, Mackenzie links this harmony to God's creation, and not to an aesthetic quality which Hutcheson explored in his work, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas on Beauty and Virtue* (1725)

³ Mackenzie, *Eloquence*, p. xiii

elevates and exalts it. And this I am confident is the only infallible Method of transmitting to Posterity all the ingenious and accurate Pleadings of the eminent Lawyers among us.¹

There was no dilemma for Mackenzie in this instance because he believed that romance was a genre which had achieved its greatest success in European literature, and so therefore to write it in the vernacular, albeit in English in this case, was the correct medium. He was however, adamant that the Scots language had a significant role to play in the courts:

It may seem a paradox to others, but to me it appears undeniable, that the Scottish idiom of the British Tongue is more fit for pleading, then either the English idiom, or the French Tongue; for certainly a Pleader must use a brisk, smart, and quick way of speaking, whereas the English who are a grave Nation, use a too slow and grave pronunciation, and the French a too soft and effeminate one. And therefore I think the English is fit for haranguing, the French for complementing, but the Scots for pleading. Our pronunciation, is like our selves, fiery, abrupt, sprightly, and bold; Their greatest wits being employ'd at Court, have indeed enrich'd very much their Language as to conversation, but all ours bending themselves to study the Law, the chief Science in repute with us, hath much smooth'd our Language, as to pleading: and when I compare our Law with the Law of *England*, I perceive that our Law favours more pleading then theirs does, for their Statutes and Decisions are so full and authoritative, that, scarce any Case admits pleading, but (like a Hare kill'd in the seat) it is immediately surpris'd by a Decision, or Statute.²

There is no shame in the Scots language as a medium of expression in the courts, in fact, when pleading a case it is a positive attribute for Mackenzie. This staunch defence of the Scots language is akin to Lismahago's spirited display in Tobias Smollett's novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), but whereas Lismahago articulated an argument

¹ *Ibid.*, p. xv

² George Mackenzie, 'What Eloquence is Fit for the Bar?', in, *Pleadings, in some remarkable cases, before the supreme courts in Scotland, since the year, 1661. To which, the decisions are subjoyn'd* (Edinburgh, 1673), p. 17

which was in contrast to the author's own view on Scotticisms and the Scots language, Mackenzie simply believed that Scots was in no way inferior to any of the other vernacular languages.¹ Despite the fact that Scots Law was not afforded stability until James Dalrymple, Lord Viscount Stair's *Institutions of the Laws of Scotland* (1681), and the influence of the English Law on the Scots Law, (although as John W. Cairns has demonstrated, this was at least in part at the behest of the Scots themselves, who saw the chance to borrow the better elements of their neighbour's system to reform their own law) the Scots language continued to be used as the linguistic currency of the courts well into the eighteenth century, as was eloquently enunciated by Lord Kames in his last speech in the Court House.² Mackenzie also defended the Scots language against English accusations that it was inferior to their own:

¹ On the subject of 'proper' English Lismahago said, 'What we generally called the Scots' dialect was, in fact, true, genuine old English, with a mixture of some French terms and idioms, adopted in a long intercourse betwixt the French and Scots nations; that the English, from affectation and false refinement, had weakened, and even corrupted their language, by throwing out the guttural sounds, altering the pronunciation and the quality and disusing many words and terms of great significance'. Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (Oxford, 1992), p. 199. Both David Hume and Adam Smith would have taken exception to such a suggestion, Hume explicitly referring to Scots as a corrupt dialect, and Smith concerned about the gutturals as part of unrefined speech. In a letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto in 1757 Hume remarked, 'Is it not strange, that at a time when we have lost our Princes, our Parliaments, our independent government, even the presence of our chief Nobility, are unhappy, in our accent and Pronunciation, speak a very corrupt Dialect of the Tongue which we make use of; is it not strange, I say, that, in these circumstances, we should really be the People most distinguished for Literature in Europe?' David Hume, Letter to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 2nd July 1757, in, J. Y. T. Young, ed., *Letters of David Hume* (2 vols., Oxford, 1932) I, p. 255. Smith was thankful that in the English language, the harsh and uncouth gutturals which had prevailed in the language had now almost entirely been laid aside. Smith, *Lectures*, p. 15. In direct opposition to this Alexander Geddes defended the language arguing that the guttural sound which had remained in Scots was an asset when translating from an accepted learned language such as Greek. To illustrate his point he borrowed a line from Pope's translation of the *Iliad*. 'Now here, now there, the giddy ships are born; / And all the ratt'ling shrouds in fragments torn', and imparted that a Scots translation is more suited to retaining the spirit of the original. 'Headlong the ships are driv'n! Thick thuds of wind / In threes and fours the soughand sails rescind.' The 'gh' sound pronounced gutturally would yield a truer impression of the original, and celebrates the distinctive features of Scots speech. Alexander Geddes, 'Dissertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect', in, *Transactions of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries* (Aberdeen, 1792), p. 420. The language was defended further by James Adams in *The Pronunciation of the English Language Vindicated* (Edinburgh, 1799), which made several references to the work of Geddes in the defence of Scots.

² John W. Cairns, 'Natural Law, National Laws, Parliaments and Multiple Monarchies: 1707 and Beyond'. Kames himself believed that the English law if properly applied could be a benefit to Scots Law. 'Our law

Nor can I enough admire, why some of the wanton English,
undervalue so much our idiom, since that of our Gentry differs
little from theirs, nor do our commons speak so rudely, as these
of *Yorkshire*: as to the words wherein the difference lyes, ours
are for the most part, old French words, borrowed during the old
League betwixt our Nations, as *Cannel*, for *Cinnamon*; and *servit*,
for *Napkin*; and a thousand of the like stamp; and if the French
Tongue be at least equal to the English, I see not why ours should
be worse then it.¹

The use of the language link to the auld alliance is apparent in the argument of Lismahago when he attempts to defend the language, but Mackenzie actually took his argument one stage further. The gentry in his eyes were virtually identical while the common folk in Scotland actually spoke with a more understandable dialect than they did in most places in England. He stressed, however, that he was not attacking the English because he felt that the Scots language was superior to its neighbour, instead, he wanted to redress some ill-conceived complaints which they had levelled against the Scots tongue. He said of the English, ‘they are a Nation I honour, but to reprove the petulancy and Malice of some amongst them, who think they do their Country good Service when they reproach our’s’.² He elaborated further on the Scots accent believing that it allowed the Scots to pronounce the languages of France, Spain and Italy with more accuracy. He also included Latin in this list. He does not explicitly state *why* this should be the case other than to cryptically remark that Scots speak with a natural accent; but such a statement could be true for any native speaker of a language. If anything, the evidence which exists from the time points to the contrary, as Françoise Waquet has shown.

Speaking of Archibald Pitcairne, the Scots doctor who taught medicine at Leyden, he

will admit of many improvements from that of England; and if the author be not in a mistake, through partiality to his native country, we are rich enough to repay with interest, all we have occasion to borrow.’ Kames, *Historical Law Tracts*, p. xiv

¹ Mackenzie, ‘What Eloquence’, p. 17

² *Ibid.*, p. 17

remarks, ‘one wonders what students at Leyden University of towards the end of the century would have learned from Archibald Pitcairne, a Scottish professor of medicine, whose accent when he spoke Latin made him virtually impossible to understand’. To reinforce his point, Waquet draws on testimony from the correspondences of students who studied at Leyden during Pitcairne’s time there.¹ In one of the very few articles which directly deals with the essay on eloquence, Beth Innocenti Manolescu, in an otherwise erudite composition believes that Mackenzie sought to bolster the status of the Scots by suggesting that their eloquence was equal if not superior to that of their rivals.² My own view is that he is merely stating that Scots is superior to English and French only in certain aspects of eloquence, and that in other areas the French and English tongues will be able to succeed where the Scots tongue will not. There is no aggressive assertion of superiority on Mackenzie’s part, only the desire to address the conception of Scots as an inferior form in the courtroom. Mackenzie should not be upheld as a champion of vernacular literature, and in this respect the example of Thomas Ruddiman serves as a prudent example.³ When it came to the learned languages, Mackenzie was firmly of the belief that Latin and Greek were superior to what the vernacular tongues could offer, and this was reinforced by the fact that he produced his ‘serious’ writings in Latin. While Mackenzie was committed to maintaining a distinctive Scottish cultural identity and style, he established it on the bedrock of classicism.⁴ When he opened the Faculty of Advocates Library in 1689, he famously described rhetoric, history and criticism as the

¹ Françoise Waquet. *Latin: The Empire of a Sign*, trans. John Howe (London, 2001), pp. 161-2

² Beth Innocenti Manolescu, ‘George Mackenzie on Scottish Judicial Rhetoric’, *Rhetorica* 20 (2002), p. 287

³ See Chapter 3: Literary Criticism in Edinburgh.

⁴ Hugh Ouston, ‘York in Edinburgh: James VII and the Patronage of Learning in Scotland, 1679-1688’, in, John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch eds., *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983), p. 152

handmaidens of jurisprudence.¹ The library was intended to provide literature for the lawyers outwith the narrow field of legal studies, as well as offering them a comprehensive legal library. However, as T. I. Rae has demonstrated, that literature was to be the Greek and Roman historians, and the Greek and Latin orators, who were to ‘cast their illumination... to fortify jurisprudence’, and not the writers of modern history, not the modern philosophers, and certainly not the writers of vernacular literature’.² Mackenzie advocated that anything which would seduce lawyers away from the service of their jealous mistress ought to be excluded from the library, and in the early eighteenth century the library was intent on building up full collections of civil and canon law, Greek and Roman classics and the history and antiquities of Great Britain. However, even from an early stage the sort of literature which Mackenzie would have frowned upon was creeping into the library. The earliest catalogue of the library (NLS MS. 549), on the 1st January 1683, while containing mostly legal books, also had copies of Hector Boece’s and George Buchanan’s histories of Scotland, as well as French belles-lettres in the form of the poet Du Bartas. Under Ruddiman the library by in large kept rigidly to the policy that Mackenzie had advocated, but the system was altered when David Hume assumed the position as keeper, and he incurred the wrath of Lords Monboddo and Hailes who were both appalled at the volume of French belles-lettres which Hume was ordering from London, on which, in their eyes, it was wholly inappropriate for the library to be

¹ George Mackenzie, *Oratio inauguralis habita Edenburgi... de structura bibliothecae pure juridicae, et hinc de vario in jure scribendi genere* (London, 1689). For more on this speech and the creation of the Faculty of Advocates Library see: *Oratio inauguralis in Aperienda Jurisconsultorum Bibliotheca*, by Sir George Mackenzie, eds., John W. Cairns and Alex M. Cain (Edinburgh, 1989) For a discussion on the actual date of the composition see: Brian Hillyard, ‘The Formation of the Advocates’ Library 1682-1728’, in, Patrick Cadell & Ann Matheson eds., *For the Encouragement of Learning: Scotland’s National Library 1689-1989* (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 23-66

² Thomas I. Rae, ‘The Origins of the Advocates’ Library’, in, Patrick Cadell & Ann Matheson eds., *For the Encouragement of Learning: Scotland’s National Library 1689-1989* (Edinburgh, 1989), p. 18

spending money.¹ Mackenzie was aware that Latin was also inappropriate in places, and as he felt that the gross introduction of Latin and Greek into literature was something which could cause aversion, he held a similar view when it was applied to the law courts. Speaking on civil law he remarked, 'I love equally ill to hear the Civil Law spoke to in the terms of a Stile Book or accidental Latin (as is most ordinary) as to hear the genuin words of our Municipal Law forced to express the phrases of the Civil Law and Doctors'.²

The style books are themselves important as sources for the literature of Scots Law. Mackenzie felt that they were a great part of the fundamental law in Scotland, and as historical documents they reflected not just the styles in use at the time, but also considered the ecclesiastical and criminal matters, as well as what was occurring in the towns and in the country, in commerce and in the family sphere. Lord Kames began a method of teaching law through the examples of the style books, and Walter Ross also applied his method to his own instruction in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Ross specifically asked the question: 'Is it not a shame to see people during the whole course of their lives, writing words, nay whole clauses, and Deeds, they do not understand, and going gravely like horses in a mill, the round of Forms, without knowing one iota of their origin, their progress or even their present importance?'³ In this respect the style books and the critical reading of them begin to form some form of literary criticism, not as overt as the belletristic rhetoric of the university professors, but in more of a forensic fashion

¹ Douglas Duncan, *Thomas Ruddiman: A Study in Scottish Scholarship in the Early Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 39

² Mackenzie, 'What Eloquence', p. 17

³ Walter Ross, quoted in, 'Style Books', in, *The Sources and Literature of Scots Law: The Stair Society* (Edinburgh, 1936), p. 302. For Ross's works in general see: Walter Ross, *Lectures on the Practice of the law of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1792)

which allowed young lawyers to become familiar with the literature of the law and criticise it in order to build up a technical vocabulary of the system.

The technical vocabulary of Scots law and its links to literary criticism are relatively limited owing to the fact that in the latter part of the eighteenth century most of the literati focussed almost exclusively on style, and in particular, a style which would supply a gentleman with polite learning and taste, make him conversant in public, but not equipped with the same concept of forensic rhetoric which would have befitted a barrister.¹ However, one of the literati who was keen to demonstrate that legal rhetoric should continue to play a part in the new rhetoric of the Scottish Enlightenment was William Leechman who twice addressed it in his unpublished lectures on Rhetoric: ‘Lectures on Composition’ (1755) and ‘A Treatise of Rhetoric, especially as it regards the Pulpit’ (1763). Leechman reminded his audience that the ancients had three kinds of eloquence: the deliberative, concerning the things which were to be done, but had not yet come to pass; the judicial, concerning the things which had passed; and the demonstrative, which concerned things either present, or which had not passed.² The second of these branches of eloquence was most suited to the courts. Although Leechman’s primary concern was how eloquence was best employed in preaching, he noticed some parallels between the pulpit and the bar. For example, he acknowledged that the primary locus for judicial rhetoric would be in the criminal law courts, where it

¹ Blair does however devote a part of his discussion on rhetoric to eloquence of the bar in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. There is also an essay which discusses the extent to which Blair’s lectures were able to influence legal education: Rajit S. Dosanjh, ‘The Eloquence of the Bar: Hugh Blair’s Lectures, Professionalism and the Scottish Legal Education,’ in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 55-67

² William Leechman, Manuscript of the ‘Treatise of Rhetoric’, 16th May 1763, GUL MS Gen.51, fol. 5

would be employed in the accusation and defence of defendants, it could therefore be extended to include the defence in Sermons:

Suppose the venerable Character of the sacred Scriptures, or any particular good Man in it, such as David's, Samuel's, Joesph's or our Saviour's be attacked, (as is very often the case) or any objections as that scripture is not entire and pure. So that there must be both Accusation and Defence: He must first vindicate Revelation in generals, and then the particular precepts and Doctrine contained in it.¹

Although Leechman perfectly understood that rhetoric and eloquence could be moved to affect the passions, and simply to persuade, he was concerned that its ultimate goal should be to affect the judgement of a person by stirring them to noble action. In this respect his concept of rhetoric was not that far removed from Mackenzie's even though they wrote almost one hundred years apart, and with regard to different professions. Leechman also insisted that for the purposes of persuasion, it was necessary that even the voice and pronunciation should have nothing offensive or disagreeable. For example, someone with too harsh or jarring a tone could ruin the eloquence of even Demosthenes or Cicero.² Ultimately Leechman was convinced that judicial rhetoric was an easier form to master than the sermon because of the way in which the orations were delivered:

It is more difficult to raise indignation against an oppressor and destroyer of one's country, than against Cataline or a Verres. So that Cicero had an easier task to raise indignation against these abandoned men, than a preacher has against Falshood, perjury, etc, and this may account for the observation that modern eloquence is inferior to the Ancient, for they had oftentimes the object before them. So even now it is easier in criminal Courts to raise indignation against the panel because he is present.³

¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 7

² William Leechman, 'Lectures on Composition by the Reverend Mr. Leechman Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow', EUL MS D.C. 7.86, fol. 119

³ *Ibid.*, fols. 152-3

Although there is a negative element to the way in which court rhetoric can be used in the legal arena, as Leechman held on to the concept that only a good man will be able to orate effectively on the grounds that he must truly believe the things that he is advocating, it is not surprising that he did concede that having the object or a plaintiff before the speaker in court was something which could elevate the level of eloquence. He says, 'it is from objects or plaintiffs being present in their view that speakers in their judicial courts speak so strong and so moving'.¹ Therefore the good man speaking well is as much a cornerstone for Leechman's views on eloquence as it was for Mackenzie's conception of it.

At Aberdeen, George Campbell who was formulating a system of belles-lettres which drew from the well of science more than from the ideas of polite taste which nourished Hugh Blair's system was also aware of the influence which the ancients had on modern judicial rhetoric. He acknowledged their excellence in devising proper rules for composition, 'not only [in] the two sorts of posey, epic and dramatic, but also in the three sorts of orations which were in the most frequent use among them, the deliberative, the judiciary, and the demonstrative,' and he went on to conclude that, 'as far as I have been able to discover, there has been little or no improvement in this respect made by the moderns'.² He believed, along with the ancients, that rhetoric could become the study of the human mind, and he also shared the classical distaste for rules and handbooks which enabled men to practice a science without understanding its principles.³

¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 293

² George Campbell, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. li

³ For more on how the classical tradition influenced Campbell, see: Douglas McDermott, 'George Campbell and the Classical Tradition', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989), pp. 403-409

The law itself had its earliest expression in a literary form. The *Iliad* for example gave early accounts of the law systems of ancient Greece and provided western culture with the emergent glint of a legal and rhetorical consciousness. As the Homeric world was entirely oral it stands to reason that rhetoric and the rhetorical nature of the law was paramount. As Walter Ong has demonstrated, the law itself in an oral culture was enshrined in formulaic sayings and proverbs which were not merely jurisprudential decorations, but actually constituted the law.¹ Ong's work builds logically on the investigations of Milman Parry who convincingly argued that the Homeric poems were not the product of a distinct literary originality, but were heavily reliant on formulaic repetitions of ideas and phrases entirely consistent with the production of an oral culture.² This is reinforced by the manner in which Homeric characters relate to one another. For example, Odysseus regularly responds to the question about whom he is with an extended formal speech, and the recourse to arrange ideas into speeches came from a time when formal oratory was an established part of history, drama and many forms of poetry. The 'justice' in the *Iliad* is therefore not arrived at via a central principle, or indeed, a set of principles. Rather, as Eric Havelock has observed, it is arrived at by a process of negotiation between contending parties carried out rhetorically.³ However, once the words of Homer had finally been written down, it made them literary pieces of evidence of how ancient law was carried out, and consequently they could be used by historians as sources for their investigations. Lord Kames did just as much in *Historical Law Tracts* where he was eager to energise the staid study of law by simply committing large

¹ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, 1982), p. 24

² Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: the Collected Papers of Milman Parry*, ed., Adam Parry (Oxford, 1971)

³ Eric A. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its substance in Plato* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 137

amounts of information to memory, and instead opted to use literature as a means of expressing his ideas. Until recently, only Ian Ross possessed the foresight to link Kames's legal writings with his literary productions; however it is clear that this was an issue of which Kames himself was very much aware.¹ This continued to be a cause for concern to Kames in following years, and he argued exactly the same point when he criticised legal education in Scotland in his work, *Elucidations Respecting the Common and Statute Law of Scotland* (1777). In his discussion of studies in Roman law he wrote, '[N]othing is presented to the young gentlemen but naked facts. Nor are even those facts selected that are more immediately connected with modern law: all are stated indiscriminately... They load the weak mind with a heap of uninteresting facts, without giving any exercise to the judgement. Is it surprising, that the Roman law, so taught is held to be a dry and fatiguing study?'² In the case of resentment and the resulting action of revenge, Kames stated that the delinquent himself was to be blamed, and may be justly punished; if someone is entitled to inflict the punishment, it must be the person injured. He then proceeded to quote from the *Iliad* as an example.³ Kames, just as he was to do when he wrote his *Elements of Criticism*, was not content to use only the ancients as the sources for his literary investigation. In fact, Kames was more prepared than his fellow literati to question the seeming perfection of the work of Homer and Pindar, even though he accepted their literary merit.

¹ Ian S. Ross, 'Scots Law and Scots Criticism: The Case of Lord Kames', *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966), pp. 614-623. More recently Beth Innocenti Manolescu has addressed the links between the two: Beth Innocenti Manolescu, 'Kames's Legal Career and Writings as Precedents for Elements of Criticism', *Rhetorica* 23 (2005), pp. 239-259

² Lord Kames, *Elucidations Respecting the Common and Statute Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1777), viii-ix

³ 'But at the Tyrant's name, / May rage rekindles, and my Soul's on flame; / 'Tis *just* Resentment, and becomes the Brave; / Disgrac'd, dishonour'd, like the vilest slave'. *Iliad* (9. 759). Kames, *Historical Law Tracts*, p. 6. He further alludes to the laws set down in the *Iliad* on pages 42-43.

It is required in every work of art, that, like an organic system, the constituent parts be mutually connected, and bear each of them a relation to the whole, some more intimate, some less, according to their definition. Order is not less essential than connection; and when due regard is paid to these, we have a sense of just composition, and so far are pleased with the performance. Homer is defective in order and connection; and Pindar more remarkably.¹

Kames argued that regularity, order and connection were restraints on a bold and fertile imagination, and this was in part why these poets had such trouble forming such smooth connections. His belief that the order and connection of the poems was defective may be in part owing to the oral transmissions of these poems, which allowed for a more lucid recital, but was not conducive to solid connection in the way that written prose form would permit.

When talking about matters of criminal injury he used Jean Racine's *Andromaque* (1667), providing a section of Act IV as an example of such injuries and how they may be expressed. The frequent recourse to literature was a logical step for Kames in the search for an accurate reconstruction of the history of law. He stated that:

In tracing the history of law through dark ages unprovided with records, or so slenderly provided, as not to afford any regular historical chain, we must endeavour, the best way we can, to supply the broken links, by hints from poets and historians, by collateral facts, and by cautious conjectures drawn from the nature of government, of the people, and of the times.²

Kames therefore used the full armoury of belles-lettres in order to provide the best education to his readers. Sean Patrick O'Rourke has demonstrated that Kames provided one of the best examples of a cross over in forensic and belletristic rhetoric, as he was able to blend together the orderly prose of the belletristic system with the evidence-based

¹ Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism* (3 vols., London, 1762), I, pp. 34-35

² Kames, *Historical Law Tracts*, p. 11

appeals of common sense.¹ The most overt example which he cites is the Douglas Cause, in which several leading figures in Scottish law took part including Kames, and Lord Monboddo. Hugh Blair himself was involved in the case, and ironically, exhibited the type of forensic rhetoric which he had rejected in his belletristic system in his university lectures.² The pursuit of knowledge for Kames can be augmented if one is prepared to investigate all written sources available to them. *Elements of Criticism* is a testimony to this mode of thought, and commercially Kames found a market which was ripe for exploitation and expansion. This was something which he realised long before he published on belles-lettres. His most influential contribution to belles-lettres, and possibly one of the most significant events for the development of it in world terms, was his invitation to Adam Smith to give a series of lectures on rhetoric in Edinburgh in the years 1748 to 1751.³ The details of these lectures have remained elusive however.⁴ D. D. Raphael has suggested that the organisation of Smith's lectures was designed to broaden the education of young lawyers starting out on their profession, and that Smith's audience generally, consisted largely of students of law and theology.⁵ The great achievement of Smith in the course of these lectures, and his subsequent course at Glasgow University,

¹ Sean Patrick O'Rourke, *The Rhetoric of Law in the Scottish Enlightenment*, unpublished PhD. Thesis, (Oregon, 1992), p. 138

² For examples of Kames's Rhetoric and a more detailed analysis of this case see: A. Francis Steuart, ed., *The Douglas Cause* (Glasgow, 1909)

³ Dugald Stewart, *Account of the life and writings of Adam Smith, LL.D.*, ed., Ian S. Ross, in, Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, eds., W. P. D. Wightman & J. C. Bryce (Oxford, 1980), p. 272. A. F. Tytler states that, 'It was by Kames's persuasion that Adam Smith, soon after his return from Oxford, and when he had abandoned all views towards the Church, for which he had been originally destined, was induced to turn his early studies to the benefit of the public, by reading a course of Lectures on Rhetoric and *Belles Lettres*. He delivered those lectures at Edinburgh in 1748, and the following two years, to a respectable auditory, chiefly composed of students in law and theology'. A. F. Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Henry Home of Kames* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1814), I, p. 266

⁴ Smith's biographer William Scott stated that, 'There is a certain amount of mystery, about the circumstances and the subject-matter of the lectures which Adam Smith delivered at Edinburgh during the three years 1748-1751'. W. R. Scott, *Adam Smith as Student and Professor* (Glasgow, 1937), p. 46

⁵ D. D. Raphael, *Adam Smith*, (Oxford, 1985)

was his change in the focus of rhetoric from persuasion to communication.¹ However, this was a far cry from the late seventeenth century where the general consensus was that lawyers were not required to study other branches of learning on the grounds that the law itself was so comprehensive. The study of law was felt to represent an encyclopaedia for jurists to such an extent that it was unnecessary to study theology by the fact that it could be learnt by understanding the civil law.² The Faculty of Advocates seemed to subscribe to this view in its debate over the foundation of a chair of law, stating, ‘The profession of the laws carys necessarily with it all the belles Letres and the knowledge of ancient and modern history’.³ Far from separating belles-lettres from the law, the Faculty appeared to be advocating that it should be included under the general education of lawyers, albeit in a manner which was wholly subordinate to the learning of the law. When Robert Dundas of Arniston was appointed the Lord President of the Faculty in 1748, he recommended that it should go out of its way to maintain its reputation for the other branches of learning which were requisite for the ‘Character of Gentlemen’, and requisite for the practice of an advocate’s profession. In the 1750s the new admission procedures which the Faculty had introduced, made no provision for students to attend certain classes or to be qualified in polite literature and learning. This is unsurprising on the grounds that even at Edinburgh, which had created the first Chair of Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres for Hugh Blair in 1762, the classes were optional and did not form part of the core curriculum, a situation which did not change until 1830. Nevertheless the Faculty did try a number of resolutions to compel students to attend the classes in the University of Edinburgh on

¹ W. S. Howell, *Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton, 1971), p. 549

² Cairns, ‘Formation of the Scottish Legal Mind’, p. 254

³ Edinburgh December 24, 1695, *Minute Book of Faculty of Advocates 1661-1750, The Stair Society* (Edinburgh, 1976), p. 160

Universal History, incidentally the Chair which Charles Mackie held, Greek and Roman Antiquities, and the Law of Nature and Nations, on the grounds that for the honour of the Faculty, all members should be familiar with every part of polite literature.

In some respects it is unusual that there was even a debate about the requirement to familiarize themselves with the new forms of rhetoric and literary criticism, as especially in the Scottish courts the ability to respond to written text was crucial to the lawyer's ability to function. Until the system was reformed in 1850, instead of submitting an oral pleading *viva voce*, or sometimes referred to as *ore tenus*, pleading was submitted in writing when cases were presented to the Court of Session.¹ There were certain financial benefits to be had in carrying out court proceedings in such a manner, for example, many a counsel scratched out a living doing nothing other than daily devising and drafting written pleadings.² Where oral pleading did exist it was best employed before the Lord Ordinary; it was the pleading in writing which would ultimately persuade the judge. Under these circumstances legal rhetoric was undergoing a process which George Kennedy has termed: *letteraturizzazione*; which is the tendency of rhetoric to shift its focus from persuasion to narration and from civic to personal contexts, as well as from discourse to literature, including poetry.³ While the written pleadings are not at either end of the spectrum they do represent a period where Scots lawyers were required to respond critically to written literature as well as adopt a system of rules and a grammar of law in order to respond effectively to the criticism. This is clearly an instance where rhetoric in Scotland had not undergone a transition from civic to civil life in the way that

¹ John A. Inglis, 'Eighteenth Century Pleading', *Juridical Review* 19 (1907-08), pp. 42-57

² David, R. Parratt, 'The Heritors of Kingsbarns against Rev. James Beatson: An example of eighteenth-century written pleading', in, *Miscellany V, The Stair Society* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 133

³ Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, p. 5

Thomas Miller has advocated that belletristic criticism had done.¹ James Boswell in particular paints a vivid picture of how the written pleading was at the heart of the Scottish system, enthusing that ‘Ours is a court of *papers*. We are never seriously engaged by when we write. We may be compared to the Highlanders in 1745. Our [oral] pleading is like their firing their musketry, which did little execution. We do not fall heartily to work till we take our pens, as they do their broadswords’.² The precise imagery of pens drawn as if for battle emphasises the civic role which pleadings still had to play in Scotland in this period. Hugh Blair was certainly aware of the power of written pleadings, and he referenced them in his lectures at Edinburgh. In fact he even incorporated one of Mackenzie’s written pleadings into his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. Blair was emphasising the role of amplification as a device in the court in order to sway the jury, and saw fit to include a pleading whereby Mackenzie built to a climax all the reasons why the jury should find against the defendant – a woman charged with killing her own child.³ While Blair noted the beauty of Mackenzie’s composition he observed that there was ‘no small appearance of art and study’ in them, and he actually believed in contradiction of the eminent Scots lawyer that his writings did not speak the language of earnestness and passion, nor were they effectual at persuasion. This was owing to the fact that Mackenzie had arranged his arguments in too artificial an order, ‘For’, cautioned Blair, ‘when much art appears, we are always put on our guard against the deceits of eloquence’.⁴ What really made Mackenzie so powerful as a lawyer was the force of his argument, which first and foremost made believable his main point. Only

¹ See Miller, *The Formation of College English*; and, Thomas Miller, ‘Where did College English Studies Come From?’

² James Boswell, *Boswell’s Edinburgh Journals* ed., H. M. Milne (2001), 2 Feb 1776, p. 238

³ For a copy of part of this written pleading see: Blair, *Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, I, p. 428

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 429

once this had been established could he take advantage of it in order to warm the mind with such artificial figures. A succinct eloquence was also one of the main aims of Lord Kames, when he conducted himself at court. Kames realised that he possessed an eloquence which was unfit to warm the passions of judges after a lengthy oration, so he instead focussed his energies into an eloquence which was brief, cool and rational. His brevity was also a benefit to the written pleadings of the court for it prevented a paper trail which could delay the legal process. This potential abuse of the system led John Ramsay to conclude that, 'much speaking is not the way to despatch much business'.¹ Nevertheless when changes were made to the legal system in 1850, there continued to be lamentation at the abolishment of the written pleadings. In 1858 an anonymous piece entitled, 'The Abolition of Written Pleading. Decline of Law Learning in Scotland' was savage in its condemnation of the changes:

[There is a] total disappearance of anything like general learning in the mode in which cases are handled. Pothier, and Voet, and Vinnius, and the Corpus Juris and all the familiar works of ancient days, occur no more. Listen to the best speeches in the court, and you hear nothing in the shape of reference to authority, but quotation of a speech yesterday delivered, in all probability by the judge to whom the address is made. The speeches are admirable *ad captandum* addresses upon the special case without any reference to those general principles of jurisprudence... Open the Corpus Juris at the present day, before any of the Supreme Courts of Scotland, and you are immediately met with the sneer, that your case must be bad indeed, when it requires such authority. Even the sound sense of Pothier, and the practical sagacity of Voet can no longer command the respectful attention with which they were listened to of yore. Craig is worse than an old almanac; Stair even is antiquated.²

¹ Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, I, p. 51

² Anon, 'The Abolition of Written Pleading. Decline of Law Learning in Scotland', *Journal of Jurisprudence* 2 (1858), pp. 49-50

The end of this system also heralded the removal of *inventio* from the written rhetoric of the law courts. This was a process which had originally started in the eighteenth century in Scotland as rhetoric was transformed into belletristic rhetoric and subsequently literary criticism. In the courts this part of rhetoric had been kept alive as lawyers had to respond critically, but also imaginatively against the written pleadings of their opponents. While the abolition of the written pleadings did not result in the end of general learning as the author lamented, it did signal the demise of *inventio* as a part of written rhetoric in Scotland.

Of the lawyers themselves, Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes (1726-1792), is a figure worthy of investigation. Although he had a steady career at the bar he was allegedly more valued for his written pleadings than for his forensic oratory.¹ He is most famous for his work *Annals of Scotland* (1776-1779), which is distinct for its rigorous critical approach to the sources of medieval Scots history, and in this field he was something of a pioneer. His critical approach was forged not in the Scottish universities but in the Netherlands at the University of Utrecht, which by the 1740s when Hailes attended, was steadily beginning to lose students, not just from Scotland, but from all over Europe. John Cairns has demonstrated that Hailes was far more of an *érudit* in the tradition of the Dutch scholars in the polyhistorical tradition, than the *philosophe* generally thought to be typical of the enlightenment.² One of the great influences on Hailes was Petrus Wesseling (1692-1764). Wesseling was a distinguished philologist, professor of history, eloquence and Greek in the Faculty of Letters from 1735, and

¹ Ramsay, *Scotland and Scotsmen*, I, pp. 395-6

² John W. Cairns, 'Legal Study in Utrecht in the late 1740s: The Education of Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes', in, Rena Van Den Bergh, ed., *Summa Eloquentia: Essays in Honour of Margaret Hewett* (Unisa, 2002), p. 34

professor of natural law and the *ius publicum Romano-Germanicum* in the Faculty of Law from 26th September 1746.¹ Wesseling was primarily a Greek scholar, but he was also an excellent polyhistor, learned in theology, legal science and philosophy. Hailes was especially drawn to his teacher's writings on Greek textual criticism, and he held a fascination with differing styles and metres of Greek poetry. In 1757 he corresponded with James Moor, professor of Greek at Glasgow about the possibility of producing a critical edition of the early Greek lyric poetry. He worked on Anacreon, Alcaeus, Sappho and Simonides producing annotated notes on them which can be found in the Newhailes collection which is housed in the National Library of Scotland. His skills in the world of literary criticism led to James Boswell remarking, 'Sir David is a man of great ingenuity, a fine scholar, an accurate critic, and a worthy member of society.'² Hailes of course should not be misconstrued as a belletrist, as his classical and continental leanings point more towards a grammarian and classical philologist. His criticism would be far more in line with a fellow classicist such as Thomas Ruddiman, who held the principles of grammatical correctness and the quality of Latin to be paramount in the appreciation of poetical works. Nevertheless, Hailes did appear to take issue with Ruddiman over some aspects of his Latinity.³ He did however, appreciate the skills of the grammarian when he assessed vernacular literature, and he vehemently argued that Allan Ramsay had not paid enough attention to his glossing of the text.

In conclusion, the law in Scotland is deeply tied to rhetoric. Lawyers such as Mackenzie, Monboddo and Kames recognised that the very nature of the oratory necessary in court required attention and a system of eloquence and style which could

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45

² Boswell, *London Journal*, p. 188.

³ NLS MS 25423 fols. 183-184

assist young lawyers. Although rhetoric began to diverge in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and move into two distinct camps of forensic rhetoric and belletristic rhetoric, a transition which occurred in no small part, owing to the efforts of Adam Smith and to lesser extent Kames himself, there were still contact points where each rhetoric could augment the other, whether this was consciously alluded to in the works of a rhetorician like William Leechman, or unconsciously in the case of Hugh Blair, who despite being renowned for his construction of the most widely read belletristic formulation of rhetoric was quite capable of using forensic rhetoric when it was required. The fact that Scots Law also delivered its pleadings in a written format is crucial to the continuation of rhetoric as a form of communication, and not just persuasion. Boswell thought the system a good one, and the vociferous complaints years after the system had been abolished demonstrated that it was a form of pleading that had worked effectively in the eighteenth and late seventeenth centuries. The lawyers themselves were also engines in the transformation of rhetoric and eloquence into new forms. Kames is the obvious figure in this regard as he produced a seminal work on literary criticism which proved popular not just in Scotland, but in Europe and America, and along with Blair's Lectures, found its way onto the American University curriculum. However, as I have demonstrated George Mackenzie is deserving of more representation in the Scots literary canon, not simply because he wrote romance literature, but because embedded in his works are the seeds of literary criticism and rhetoric which would bloom so spectacularly when nourished by the Scots literati of the eighteenth-century.

CHAPTER 6: RELIGIOUS RHETORIC

When one observes the Enlightenment in Scotland, the overwhelming evidence indicates that the Scottish clergy were integral in aiding its growth and development.¹ Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century a significant number of Scotland's contributions to the world of polite literature were provided by members of the church.² The development and transmission of rhetoric and literary criticism were no different. Although prominent figures outside of the church produced notable works on rhetoric and belles-lettres, such as Lord Kames, David Hume and Adam Smith, the majority of the works which dealt with these disciplines came from the pens of ministers of the Church of Scotland. Hugh Blair, George Campbell, Alexander Gerard, William Leechman, John Witherspoon and James Beattie, who produced works on rhetoric, eloquence and taste were all ordained church of Scotland ministers, while men such as William Robertson, Alexander Carlyle, John Home and Adam Ferguson aided the growth of polite literature with their own compositions. Carlyle even went as far as to declare that Hume and Smith were more deficient than his fellows in their literary appreciation, for he stated: 'With respect to taste, we held David Hume and Adam Smith inferior to the rest, for they were both prejudiced in favour of the French tragedies, and did not sufficiently appreciate Shakespeare or Milton. Their taste was a rational act, rather than the instantaneous effect of fine feeling'.³ Indeed such was the stranglehold of the moderate literati in the period

¹ For an example of how influential the clergy were in transmitting the ideals of the Enlightenment see, Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Princeton, 1985)

² For a more detailed list of Scottish authors for the period 1746-1800 together with a list of their professions, see Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors and Their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland and America* (Chicago, 2006), pp. 613-619

³ Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Reverend Alexander Carlyle Minister of Inveresk* (Edinburgh, 1861), p. 283

after 1750 that the common perception which has come to dominate the historiography is a strict division between the enlightened moderates, acting as the arbiters of taste and manners in Scottish culture, and the more evangelical and religiously orthodox popular party¹ in the Church, and their followers, who believed the pursuit of polite literature to have been a luxury which infringed upon man's real business of glorifying God.² While it is certainly true that the moderates dominated their popular counterparts in the publication of materials which pertained to taste and composition, it would be inaccurate to write off the literary endeavours of their opponents as simply the extremist ideas of religious fundamentalists.³ Nowhere is this clash of opposing styles more pronounced or more misunderstood than over the Douglas controversy which raged from the end of 1756 and into 1757, and pitted the two sides against each other over the role of the stage and the value of literary production. However, before the moderates even achieved their position of cultural ascendancy, it is necessary to reach deeper into the past in order to investigate the rhetorical impulses which fuelled their own brand of rhetoric and the emerging discipline of literary criticism. The Reformation played no mean part in this reconfiguration of rhetorical practice, for even though Calvinism was often reduced to

¹ As John MacIntosh has identified, the term Popular party is an imprecise moniker attributed to a large group opposed to the moderates in the General Assembly, particularly over the issue of Patronage but which nevertheless was not a coherent organization. However, for the purposes of this chapter I will deploy the terms to mean those in the Church of Scotland writing against the moderates in the sphere of polite literature, most specifically with regard to the pamphlet war over the play *Douglas*. For more on the problems of labeling the Popular party see, John R. MacIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: The Popular Party, 1740-1800* (East Linton, 1998)

² The belief that the popular party stood for a narrow-minded anti-culturalist agenda has long been perpetrated among Scottish historians: W.L. Mathieson, *The Awakening of Scotland: A History from 1747 to 1797* (Glasgow, 1910) pp. 197-99, 229-30; J. H. S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1983) pp. 304-5; A. L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Scottish Church 1688-1843: The Age of the Moderates* (Edinburgh, 1973) pp. 76-8; and Anand Chitnis, *Scottish Enlightenment* (London, 1976), pp. 54-5

³ MacIntosh estimates that there were around twelve times as many moderate publications in the literary field as popular ones. However the popular party produced far more analyses of scriptural passages and commentaries of the bible than the moderates. John R. MacIntosh, 'The Popular party in the Church of Scotland, 1740-1800', (Glasgow University PhD. Thesis, 1989), Appendix E

dogmatic doctrine whereby its adherents removed any appreciation of the fine arts, even Calvin himself appreciated the virtues of rhetoric. Therefore before an appraisal of Scottish rhetoric and criticism can take place it is crucial to establish the roots of a Protestant system of rhetoric which developed a distinct identity from its pre-reformation counterpart. This leads to a secondary problem in Scotland where two competing Protestant organisations vied for control of Church governance. As such it is necessary to assess the rhetorical tropes which each side used against the other, and how this aided the development of rhetorical understanding before the moderate Presbyterians assumed a cultural dominance.

The early proponents of a distinctive branch of Protestant rhetoric actually owe a great debt to the humanist teaching programmes in the early sixteenth century. The terminology of humanism derives from *humanista*, which was coined in the Renaissance. *Humanista* itself came from the older term, *studia humanitatis*, which was used to denote a liberal or a literary education. This system of education which the ancients had first employed was subsequently rehabilitated by the Italian scholars of the late fourteenth century, most notably Petrarch (1304-1374). However, this type of humanism was accommodated by both the Catholic and Protestant Churches after the Reformation. Erasmus (c.1466-1536) used the impulses of this new learning in his efforts to arrest the spiritual decline he detected across Europe. He believed that it was with language that any spiritual and moral Renaissance would have to take place. By developing a better understanding of the ancient languages through the classics, the lessons that had been learned in this exercise could therefore be redeployed to garner a better understanding of the Scriptures, and in turn help to eradicate the vulgar errors that had crept into them and

ultimately restore them to a simple truth.¹ Although by the time of the Enlightenment Erasmus had become more or less acceptable as an influence for both Protestants and Catholics, he had undergone a Protestantising process in England during the Renaissance. The scholar Richard Taverner (1505-1575) helped to popularize his work, but he also cleverly edited parts of it, and provided some loose translations which appeared favourable to the Protestant cause. Taverner did not adjust Erasmus's opinions on rhetoric and eloquence, despite his own belief that right action, and right reason were to be preferred over excessive rhetoric. Nevertheless, he recruited Erasmus to promote a balanced view between Catholics and Lutherans, while implying that the right way when reason and eloquence was applied was the Lutheran way.²

Even John Calvin the founder of Calvinism owed much to his early humanist education. As Robert Linder has pointed out, Calvin himself was exposed to humanist learning to such a degree, that not even Erasmus had experienced as much New Learning in his youth.³ Pierre Viret (1511-1571), who would likewise go on to become a prominent member of the Reformed Church, was also exposed to humanist learning from an early age. Although he did not receive an education as thorough as Calvin did, he nevertheless recounted that his teacher Marc Romain had instilled in him a love of humanism and religion. 'It was he who was the first to begin to extricate us in our youth from crudity and sophistry and not only to instruct us in *belles lettres humaines*, as concerns *litterae*

¹ Erasmus was one of the pioneers of biblical criticism.

² John K. Yost, 'Taverner's Use of Erasmus and the Protestantization of English Humanism', *Renaissance Quarterly* 23 (1970), pp. 266-276

³ Linder cites the fact that Calvin studied at the major intellectual centres of France. At Paris he developed his Latin style under Mathurin Cordier, while at Orléans he added to his Greek under Melchior Wolmar. After learning law in Bourges, he finally returned to Paris where he attended the newly established Royal Lectures. Robert D. Linder, 'Calvinism and Humanism: The First Generation', *Church History* 44 (1975), p. 169. As a young scholar Calvin published his *Commentary on the De Clementia* (1532), which François Wendel has noted as being written in the style of Erasmus: François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of his Religious Thought* trans. Philip Mairet (New York, 1963), p. 27

humaniores, but also he was the first to give us the taste of the Gospel, and urge us to study and follow it'.¹ In this period poetics were seen as an auxiliary of grammar and rhetoric, which were themselves subordinated in the hierarchy of art and sciences which were viewed as stemming from one great fund of philosophy.² A humanist education therefore consisted of rhetoric, grammar, history, poetry and moral philosophy, and each of these subjects invited the reading and interpretation of the Latin and Greek authors.³ The pursuit of eloquence was also a key component of the humanist's education. Humanists stuck closely to the Ciceronian model which portrayed the orator as a hero. Thus the true orator would be able to incorporate rich learning, experience and a good character into one force capable of persuasion. The method of this orator was both to instruct and delight, with the ultimate goal to encourage mankind to do good.⁴ This emphasis on eloquence demonstrated that the humanists did not conceive of rhetoric as an empty art of persuasion, but an art which had a positive role to play in benefiting society as a whole. Rhetoric was also an art which both Calvin and Viret believed in deeply. For the power of rhetoric permitted the user the opportunity to reach a wider audience than they could have done otherwise, and in Calvin's case it ran through the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536).⁵ Calvin's rhetorical system was similar to that of Cicero's, but Calvin was not a Ciceronian in the Renaissance sense. Ciceronianism in

¹ Pierre Viret, quoted in, Linder, 'Calvinism and Humanism', p. 171. Viret also recognized early on that if he wanted to reach the widest possible audience that adherence to Latin would be a hindrance. Therefore several of his works were written in French, as he believed that the vernacular was the most effective way of reaching the masses.

² Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (2 vols., London, 1961), I pp. 1-37

³ Paul O. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought* (New York, 1961), pp. 9-10

⁴ For more on the humanist perception of eloquence see: Hannah H. Gray, 'Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24 (1963), pp. 497-514; Neil Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* (Hemel Hempstead, 1992); Wayne A. Rebhorn, *The Emperor of Men's Minds: Literature and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric* (London, 1995)

⁵ Quirinus Breen, 'John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition', *Church History* 26 (1957), pp. 3-21

this period meant the deliberate imitation of the Roman orator, as exemplified in the Italian scholar Pietro Bembo and more overtly in the Belgian humanist Christophe Longolius (1490-1522). Therefore, Calvin cultivated a style which was very much his own, but which owed a debt to Cicero's. If there was a style which he imitated, it was the style of the Bible. The *Institutes* incorporates the three kinds of rhetorical discourse: epideictic, deliberative, and forensic.¹ Calvin's rhetorical logic was both sound and extensive, but he suffered from the Renaissance disease of a lack of brevity. Nevertheless, despite his verbosity at times, he was capable of arguing with clarity. Such was Calvin's style that Abel Lefranc has praised his ability to use images and comparisons which were frequently picturesque and pleasing to the taste.² Both Calvin and Viret were also keen not to turn their back on the classics, although both were adamant that they were subordinate to the divine teachings of Scripture. Viret specifically stated that he did not condemn the reading of good authors and poets, nor did he wish to ban the reading of the heathen orators and philosophers, as long as an individual had a thorough grounding in the Christian religion. Meanwhile Calvin encouraged the reading of Demosthenes, Cicero, Plato and Aristotle, but cautioned that despite their eloquent writings, the sacred Scriptures were the works that would truly capture the reader's heart.³ The problem which Calvinism has laboured under for much of its history is the perception of it as a movement bereft of any aesthetic sense, or appreciation for the fine arts. However, this would be an inaccurate assumption to make, for as has been illustrated, Calvin himself appreciated the teachings of the ancients, and had a firm grasp of the classics. Furthermore, he enjoyed poetry and music, praised the work of certain

¹ For examples and analysis of each of these types see: Breen, 'Rhetorical Tradition', pp. 8-12

² Abel Lefranc, quoted in, Breen, 'Rhetorical Tradition', p. 16

³ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols., London, 1961), I, p. 82

poets and even wrote some of his own. This is a problem which the Church of Scotland faced in the late seventeenth and during the eighteenth century, first of all when the Episcopalians depicted them as dogmatic and narrow minded, and secondly within the Presbyterian establishment itself when the moderates attacked the evangelicals for their unenlightened stance over literary freedom and expression. The humanist influence on Calvin is somewhat similar to the enlightenment influence on John Witherspoon. Both were men who had been exposed to classical learning while in their youth, and both retained an appreciation for the values which they expressed, provided of course, that these ideas were ultimately subordinate to the teachings contained in the Scriptures. Both of these men also had a shared distaste for the theatre as a form of recreation. Although Calvin did not address it specifically in his writings, there is evidence that in 1546 a proposed performance of Hercules was prohibited from Geneva. Nevertheless several dramatic productions were permitted there, provided that they dealt with an elevated subject.¹ Even George Buchanan indulged in writing two plays in the 1540s: *Jepthes sive Votum* and *Baptistes sive Calumnia*, which were performed by his students at Guyenne in Bordeaux.²

While figures like Calvin demonstrated an appreciation of the power of rhetoric, the most vital figure for Protestants in the crafting of a new form of rhetoric was Petrus Ramus (1515-1572). Ramus was born in France, and taught at the University of Paris, where he held the title of Regius professor of eloquence and philosophy. The title itself

¹ Leslie P. Spelman, 'Calvin and the Arts', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6 (1948), p. 248

² Witherspoon acknowledged that Buchanan's plays had some merit to them, and recognized that he had attempted to replace bad plays with good. John Witherspoon, *A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and Effects of the Stage* (Glasgow, 1757), p. 11; Adam Ferguson in his defence of plays likewise cited Buchanan as a quality playwright. Adam Ferguson, *The Morality of Stage Plays Seriously Considered* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. 27

was indicative of the straining impulses of humanism, which valued eloquence, and scholasticism which leaned towards philosophy. The date of his conversion to Protestantism is unclear; it most likely occurred in the early 1560s, however, he had a reputation as being a secret Protestant, even when he was a practising Catholic.¹ His Protestant faith compromised his university position, owing the royal edicts that prevented Protestants from holding such posts, and as a known Protestant figure, Ramus was a prime target during the rioting of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, where he ultimately lost his life. As has been alluded to earlier, Ramus's most significant contribution to rhetoric was to remove *inventio* from its ancient position as one of the five columns of rhetoric, and instead to assign it to dialectic.² As Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine have intimated, Ramus was instrumental in tracing the moment when humanism became the 'humanities'.³ At a more specific level, this precipitated the movement from rhetoric to literary criticism which the Scottish rhetoricians would fully exploit in the eighteenth century. Ramus however, has a deeper connection to Scotland, and Scottish conceptions of rhetoric than simply his religious affiliation. Contrary to general belief, it was not Gabriel Harvey who introduced Ramus to the English-speaking world, but the Scot Roland MacIlmaine, who at St. Andrews University published the first edition of Ramus in English. The term English needs a qualification however. MacIlmaine used a large amount of Scottish words in his translation, and was proud to use the vernacular, of

¹ For an account of Ramus's ambiguous relationship with both Catholicism and Protestantism see: James Veazie Skalnik, *Ramus and Reform: University and Church at the end of the Renaissance* (Kirkville, 2002), pp. 88-115. For the Huguenots Ramus was a valuable recruit owing to his upright morals, prestige and erudition. Catholics were also not disappointed with his conversion, for it allowed his opponents to point to his heresy among his other flaws, such being a mere peasant, and his dangerous innovation.

² See Chapter 5

³ Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe* (London, 1986), p. 162

both Scotland and England. In the introduction to his *The Logicke of the Moste Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus, Martyr* (1574), MacIlmaine argued:

Shall we then thinke the Scottyshe or Englishe tongue, is not fitt to write any art into? no in dede... But thou wilt saye, our tongue is barbarous, and theirs [the Latin and Greek] is eloquent? I aunswere thee as Anacharsis did to the Athenienses... by the which aunswere he signifieth that every mans tongue is eloquent ynoughe for hym self, and that others in respecte of it had as barbarous.¹

Using the ancients themselves as ammunition, MacIlmaine opened fire on those who believed the vernacular was incapable of transmitting complex ideals. In this respect he actually emulated Ramus himself, as he had produced his own vernacular version of his work in 1555 before he brought out a Latin edition. As a result of MacIlmaine's efforts Ramism was established at St Andrews before it reached Cambridge. This was augmented by the personal connections which those at St Andrews had with the French professor. James Stewart, Earl of Mar and Moray was a St Andrews graduate who had studied under Ramus at Presle. MacIlmaine had likewise been his student, but one of the most significant figures who attended his lectures in Paris was Andrew Melville, who was the Principal of St Mary's College at St Andrews.² Before that he initiated Ramist reform at the University of Glasgow, and afterwards he moved on to continue his teaching at King's College. When Melville arrived at Glasgow in 1574 he taught Greek and lectured on a variety of ancient authors. Rhetoric formed a significant part of his second year teaching, with both Aristotle and Cicero's *De Oratore* forming the core

¹ Roland MacIlmaine, *The Logicke of the Moste Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus*, Matyr ed. Catherine M. Dunn (Northridge, 1969), p. 9

² Neil Rhodes, 'From Rhetoric to Criticism', in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 25

texts.¹ The Scottish influence in Paris at this time was not insignificant, for the works of Robert Caubraith, David Cranston and most importantly John Major (Mair) formed a part of the teaching curriculum. It was in this environment that Ramus became exposed to the teachings of logic and rhetoric; fields that he would in later years do much to alter.

Ramus actually remarked that the humanist movement at Paris came about in part thanks to a reaction against the 'Scots and Spaniards', who were also a strong academic presence. Humanists such Petrarch and Coluccio Salutati who led the early attack on Scholasticism often regarded their enemies as coming from the British Isles; enemies which included Walter Burleigh, and Ralph Strode.²

Just as Ramus reacted to British thought, and in his turn influenced subsequent generations of rhetoricians, he provided a model of emulation for English as well as Scottish thinkers. In particular, he was a significant influence on the poet and man of letters Sir Philip Sidney. He was sympathetic to Ramian methods, and the two men even entered into correspondence. When Sidney embarked on his grand tour, he also stayed with Ramus's printer André Wéchel, and in turn, some copies of Ramus's posthumous *Commentary on the Christian Religion* were dedicated to Sidney.³ The English poet was no mean literary critic himself, and his 'The Defence of Poesie' was not only one of the great works of Renaissance literary criticism but it also took a distinctly Protestant view of rhetoric. In his early years he had even read Calvin's catechism, although this was in a period before the doctrine had become established as a dogmatic system.⁴ Sidney's aim in the 'Defence' was to redefine the function of poetry which under the older Catholic

¹ M. L. Clarke, *Classical Education in Britain 1500-1900* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 140

² B. L. Ullman, *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome, 1955), pp. 28-29

³ Walter J. Ong, *Ramus: Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, Massachusettes, 1958), p. 302

⁴ The account of the purchase can be found in, Malcolm W. Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. 406-23

system was now inappropriate for the Protestant mindset. The original Catholic defence of poetry, that it drove the reader to seek for knowledge upon which they could act had to be altered. Instead Sidney erected a new construction of which this ideal formed only a part of the system. The most important element was the ability of the poet to move his readership, and in this instance Sidney enlisted the help of ancients, most notably Aristotle to expound his new system:

For who will be taught, if he be not moved with desire
to be taught? And what so much good doth that teaching
bring forth (I speak still of moral doctrine) as that it moveth
one to do that which it doth teach? For, as Aristotle sayth, it
is not γνῶσις but πράξις must be the fruit. And how πράξις
can be, without being moved to practice, it is no hard matter to
consider.¹

Sidney's system also answered the Puritan critics who theorised that men were more prone to do what was bad than what was good. If the poet was able to move readers into doing good, then it did not matter if they themselves took evil from the poem, because the good poet would deny them the chance in the first place.² Sidney's view of Protestant rhetoric and literary criticism, and his concept of the good poet creating morally valuable poetry was an ideal which was ultimately adopted into the British critical mindset. Sidney's legacy is clearly detectable in the literary works of Sir George Mackenzie, but it is also present in the pulpit eloquence of Leechman and Blair, who drew on both the Protestant heritage of Sidney, but also the ancient wisdom of Cicero and Quintilian, for

¹ Sir Philip Sidney, 'An Apology for Poetry, or, the Defence of Poetry', ed., Geoffrey Sheppherd (Manchester, 2002), p. 25. For more on the influence of Aristotle on Sidney see: Paula H. Payne, 'Tracing Aristotle's 'Rhetoric' in Sir Philip Sidney's Poetry and Prose', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 20 (1990), pp. 241-250

² Andrew D. Weiner, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts* (Minnesota, 1978), pp. 37-41

they insisted upon the good man speaking well, as the key component in producing virtuous action in civil life.

Before the Scottish Presbyterians could establish these rhetorical rules in a position at the head of the Scottish Church, they had to contend with the Episcopalians. The political and religious manoeuvring which took place between the two factions spilled over into the spheres of eloquence and rhetoric, as both sides engaged in polemical debates. However, there were a number of Episcopalian figures who demonstrated proto-enlightenment thought in their attitudes towards the politer arts of rhetoric and criticism. Among the most prominent proponents of this group were Gilbert Burnet and Robert Leighton. Bishop Burnet wrote down his system for a suitable education, *Thoughts on Education* (1761) while he was acting as tutor to the young Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun. He composed it when he was a young man himself in 1668 at the age of twenty-five, however, as he never intended it to be published it took almost one hundred years before it was printed. Unlike dogmatic teachers who drilled their charges with an endless repetition of the catechism, Burnet noted that for a young mind it was unsuitable as a means for learning, owing to the harsh and often complicated words which littered its pages. Instead, the Psalms were the key to instructing youth, because, according to Burnet, ‘the frequent repetition of the same words together with the plainness of the style, will make their labour easier’.¹ In the reading process itself, Burnet advised that care should be taken over how the Psalms were read; and the reader ought to pronounce fully and plainly the words contained within them. At this early stage in development, Burnet did not care for the reading of the Psalms in metre, for he believed that the cadence of the line would instil in them an inappropriate tone, and in fact the

¹ Gilbert Burnet, *Thoughts on Education* (London, 1761), p. 12

chief care should be to pronounce the syllables in a suitable manner. Once a child was old enough, Burnet prescribed a broad education which encompassed a variety of interests, as this would have the benefit of making their conversation more agreeable and pleasant.¹ The study of rhetoric was a precarious undertaking for Burnet, because it was such a complicated discipline that to attempt to instil the rules of it into a child, before they were old enough to possess a solid understanding of things in general would lead to a deformed rhetorical understanding. In Burnet's time the decoupling of rhetoric and logic had not yet taken full effect, and he conceived of them as an inter-related pair, stating, 'all the difference betwixt these being that the one is reason in a court dresse, the other in a military garb'.² Therefore he rejected the ancients' system which saw their youth taught from an early age the elegancies of their own tongue. He acknowledged that this lack of eloquence was something which critics in the seventeenth century accused the western languages of, and oratory in particular was at a disadvantage because it was often not taught until a youth reached a university. In place of the rules of rhetoric Burnet advocated the learning of a foreign language as it would provide both a set of rules to adhere to and a practical skill which would be of benefit in later life. The study of either Latin or French was to be encouraged as the first point of study, and in particular Burnet professed a bias for the Latin tongue. Nevertheless, even here he demonstrated a remarkably enlightened outlook over its instruction, because if a child demonstrated a distinct aversion to it, they should not be forced to learn it. Burnet concluded, 'I would not for that judge him lost, nor drive his mind quite from study; since he may be a

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29

² *Ibid.*, p. 38

knowing man without a word of it'.¹ His words put him completely at odds with his fellow Episcopalians Pitcairne and Ruddiman, who viewed Latin as the foundation stone of learning as well as of Scottish cultural identity. Furthermore his insistence that it was not necessary to drum these rules of grammar into an individual who could not understand it would have drawn a stinging rebuke from Ruddiman in particular if he had ever come across Burnet's manuscript. He remained unrepentant, and went on to state that the entire system of Latin teaching in Scotland was flawed. Burnet questioned why youths who spent many years in useless study of the language could suddenly attain perfection in it when they were in France or Holland for no longer than six to eight months. Part of the answer lay in the rules of grammar, which according to Burnet was the most ill suited method with which to teach. Burnet believed that it was 'so tedious, so crabbed, and unpleasant, that it serves rather to scarre than to invite boyes. There is no need for learning anomalies, or all particular rules, by grammar; for these are best taught by practice'.² Although he rejected a strict set of grammatical rules, he was certainly no belletrist either, for he discarded the comparative style of a multitude of authors. He conceded that this would allow for an element of variety, of which he was a strong advocate, but he was concerned that such a practice would damage their potential to form a correct style. The remedy was to read over and over the works of writers such as Terence and Caesar, who provided an excellent model for an appropriate style. In the poetic realm, Virgil possessed a superiority of style, although Burnet felt his inventive stock to be low, and as such argued that he did not deserve the title of a poet, but instead

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40

² *Ibid.*, p. 41

was merely an eloquent versifier.¹ In general the histories of the ancients were adequate models for affirming the Latin language in the mind of the individual, but modern histories were also acceptable. Burnet specifically cited Buchanan as the chief of the modern historians with the added benefit to the reader of familiarising themselves with quality Latin productions.

Burnet along with Robert Leighton (1611-1684) and to a lesser extent Hugh Binning (1627-1653) represented the more enlightened members of the Episcopalian elite. Binning had become a professor of philosophy at Glasgow when he was just twenty years old, but he began to preach in a way that was simple, yet eloquent. His contemporary Robert Baillie remarked that his preaching style was unscriptural, and that he spoke with a 'high romancing style'.² Leighton is significant owing to the new style of preaching which he helped to install in Scottish pulpits; a style that provided a discourse on a common subject, rather than focussing on a close textual analysis. Leighton's style of oratory and his preaching model were exactly the modes of preaching which the moderate literati would propound as the enlightened ideal. Leighton was also the professor of Divinity at Edinburgh University, and taught two of the most prominent virtuosi in Scotland, Robert Sibbald and Archibald Pitcairne. To both of these men he provided moral and classical inspiration. However, once the Presbyterians took over Church governance in the years 1689-90 a polemical battle erupted between the two factions which spilled over into the literary realm. One of the most savage attacks on the learning and eloquence of the Presbyterians came in the form of, *The Scots Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd: or, the Folly of their Teaching Discover'd* (1692). This tract

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42

² Robert Baillie, *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, ed., David Laing, Bannatyne Club (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1841-1842), III, p. 258

systematically attacked the core of Presbyterian preaching, and argued that it was infested with ignorance and bombast.¹ Along with Archibald Pitcairne and others, the author used his Latinate learning and erudition as a weapon with which to strike at the Presbyterians. While the Episcopalians were depicted as cool and rational reasoners in the pulpit, their counterparts were portrayed as fiery and passionate. The author complained, 'Now the World knows they are not led by Reason, nor Religion, but by Fancy and Imagination... What Ministers can be expected from the Choice of a People void of Common Sense, and guided by irregular Passions, who torture the Scripture, making it speak the Language of their deluded Imaginations'.² The author also identified to his own satisfaction, the style of biblical preaching conducted by the Presbyterians. It was a style which drew heavily from Chapters of Ezekiel, Daniel or the Revelation, all books which themselves contained some of the most incendiary passages in the Bible. He attacked Gilbert Rule's sermon drawn from Isaiah, and proclaimed that most of the texts which formed the Presbyterian gospel were taken from obscure places in the Old Testament. The tract was determined to paint all the Presbyterians as 'fire and brimstone' orators, terrifying their parishioners with threats of hell and damnation. In certain respects, the author was attacking the weak points of the Presbyterian system. For Gilbert Rule in his, *A Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland being an answer to five pamphlets* (1691) had commented that his attackers had associated his own elegant style of preaching, with that

¹ David Reid has argued that even though the piece is insolent and malicious, there is a certain amount of humour about it, although ultimately the author's contempt for the speech of his countrymen itself becomes contemptible. David Reid, *The Party Coloured Mind* (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 10. For a publication history and analysis of the tract see: Thomas Maxwell, 'The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence: A Post-Revolution Pamphlet', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 8 (1944) pp. 225-251

² [Gilbert Crockatt & John Munroe], *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence Display'd: or, the Folly of their Teaching Discover'd*, (London, 1738), p. 10

of the Cameronians who, 'stood at a distance from the sober Presbytery'.¹ The problem of the Cameronians being synonymous with the Presbyterians was also a matter of concern for Robert Wodrow. Although he was not entirely unsympathetic to the Cameronians, for he believed that they were good Protestants driven to extremity by their tormentors, he nevertheless attempted to distance himself from them, and showed concern over the fact that they had adopted measures which threatened the Church of Scotland.² The author of *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* however, saw no difference between the two groups, and believed that each was as bad as the other. 'This is the meek lowly Strain of the Presbyterian New Gospel, whereby the Soberest of them pretend to vindicate their own Proceedings, and refute the Writings of other Men'.³ Bishop John Sage (1652-1711) who was one of most able Episcopalian polemicists, also attacked the Presbyterians for their lack of skill in writing and speaking. He lamented that even engaging with them reduced the quality of his own literary production, as in order for them to understand, he would have to alter his own style. 'I ever thought that much of the *Beauty*, as well as of the *Utility* of Books, lay in *Good Method*, and a distinct *Range* of Thoughts: And I cannot promise that I have observed *That*, so punctually, as Clearer Heads might have done'.⁴ Sage went on to offer an apology for writing in Scots and the number of Scotticisms which had crept into his work. However, this had only occurred because he could not avoid reading in broad Scots the arguments of the Presbyterians. As with men such as Pitcairne, this rejection of the Scots language should not be swallowed as an inferiority

¹ Gilbert Rule, *A Second Vindication of the Church of Scotland being an answer to five pamphlets* (Edinburgh, 1691), p. 113

² Robert Wodrow, *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, ed., Robert Burns (4 vols., Glasgow, 1828), III, p. 208

³ [Crokatt & Munro], *Presbyterian Eloquence*, p. 59

⁴ John Sage, *The Fundamental Charter of Presbytery as it hath been lately established in the kingdom of Scotland* (London, 1695), p. 3

complex in the face of a polite English style, but rather the manipulation of an author who was intimating to his readership that he would rather use Latin, but has had to lower himself to the vernacular. In other words, Sage established, albeit subtly, that his work was to be pardoned because he had deliberately reduced his own style so that the uneducated might be able to follow what he was saying. The depiction of the Presbyterians as rude and boorish in the pulpit was a weapon which the Episcopalians frequently deployed, and here the author of the *Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* proceeded to undermine the preaching style of their ministers, taking issue with the rhetorical devices and rules of composition to which they adhered. 'The most of their sermons are nonsensick Raptures, the Abuse of Mystick Divinity, in canting and compounding Vocables, oft-times stuffed with impertinent and base Similes, and always with homely, coarse, and ridiculous Expressions, very unsuitable to the Gravity, and Solemnity, that becomes the Divinity'.¹ This is a far cry from the moderates' promotion of refined taste and genteel eloquence in the pulpit. By the mid-eighteenth century preachers such as Leechman, Blair and Fordyce would go on to establish rules for elegant preaching that would warm the passions, and encourage the use of appropriate similes to entertain their congregation. Moreover these later Presbyterian preachers were comfortable in citing some of the Episcopalians preachers of choice for their own standard of excellence. In particular the Anglican John Tillotson was held up as a paragon of suitable preaching style. However, the Episcopalians of the 1690s did their utmost to reduce any refined style that the Presbyterians possessed and instead created an image of an inarticulate and severe ministry, where ignorant preachers tormented their charges with incoherent ramblings. By suggesting that they were making a mockery of the gravity and solemnity

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23

of the occasion they not only further condemned the Presbyterians' style, they also elevated their own form of preaching to a level of enlightened rationality. The author of *The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence* believed that this hard line approach which was so admired by the Presbyterians had come from Samuel Rutherford's *Letters* (1664) (Originally titled: *Joshua Redivivus, or Mr Rutherford's Letters*). He not only attacked the style which Rutherford had imparted to his fellows, but he also criticised the language which they used, because the *Letters*, 'spoke out in their own Dialect the Spirit of *Scots Presbyterians*'.¹ The denigration of the Scots language in this instance is not so much a sense of inferiority when placed next to the English language, but rather the cultural elitism of certain members of the Episcopacy who asserted their superiority over their opponents by promoting the Latin tongue as the language of learning and enlightenment.

The sacrifice of an elegant Latin style for plain vernacular should not automatically be viewed as a detriment to the Presbyterian method of literary production. In this respect, Wodrow's *History* is significant from a stylistic point of view, because he willingly sacrificed literary elegance in order to provide as much factual detail as possible. The historians of the past, most notably George Buchanan and Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh, believed that documentary evidence was not essential to historical writing. Instead, they imaginatively reconstructed the past in order to teach a moral truth.² Part of the reason for this was the Renaissance appropriation of history as a form of eloquence. Under this system, it was more important to provide an entertaining story which would lead to this truth, rather than dryly report the bare facts which would

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89

² A. M. Starkey, 'Robert Wodrow and the History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland' *Church History* 43 (1974), p. 493; F. S. Fussner, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought, 1580-1640* (London, 1962), p. 115

render any potential lesson inert. Wodrow considered this pointless, and employed historical research more in line with the antiquarians of his day than the actual writers of histories. He had little time for those who did not conduct thorough investigative research, including Daniel Defoe, whose *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland* (1717) he dismissed as a work created from hearsay.¹ He was aware that such a trade off would affect the accessibility of his work, but it was an exchange that he was willing to make for the sake of truth, although, of course this is to say nothing of the not inconsiderable Presbyterian bias which he brought to the *History*.

Robert Sibbald (1644-1722), was also a proponent of this antiquarian form of investigation. Sibbald was initially an Episcopalian, but under the influence of his patron he converted to Catholicism in 1685. He also continued a tradition which kept alive the Latinate poetry that had become a model under Drummond of Hawthornden, Johnston, and Buchanan, and among his Latin eulogies, was contained the title, 'Scottish Kings, Nobility and Persons of Rank or Literary eminence who flourished during the 16th and 17th centuries'.² Although Sibbald's interests were primarily antiquarian, he did carry out investigations into the literary history of Scotland, and he produced two books on the subject.³ These books were never published, but Sibbald did take the measure of dividing his volumes into one containing poetry in Latin and Greek, and one containing poetry written in Scots as well as other languages in Europe.⁴ Sibbald's contemporary Pitcairne was the very epitome of elitist Episcopalianism railing against the ignorance and

¹ Robert Wodrow to James Fraser, *The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow*, ed., Thomas McCrie (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1842-1843), II, pp. 541-543

² Robert Sibbald, NLS Adv. MS 33.5.14

³ Stan Mendyk believes that Sibbald's frequent recourse to literary texts infringed on the scientific impact of his antiquarian investigations. Stan Mendyk, *Speculum Britanniae: Regional Study, Antiquarianism and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto, 1989), p. 217

⁴ Sir Robert Sibbald, 'Ane Account of the Scottish Poets either printed or manuscript which I have seen from ancient times to the year 1701' NLS Adv. MS 33.3.24

backwardness of Presbyterianism. For Pitcairne, their restoration represented the decline of learning, and had instead elevated religious fanaticism and illiteracy. He provided two stringent attacks on the Presbyterians in his play *The Assembly* (c.1692) and the poem *Babell*. Both of these works share similar features, and deploy comparable methods of attack. Primarily, both undermine the General Assembly of the early 1690s, through a religious assault over the Presbyterian factionalism over the *Pater Noster* and the Bible. Both are also laden with caricature which presents the Presbyterians as ignorant and stupid. A perfect example of this, which also incorporates literary criticism over their appreciation for inferior forms of literature is contained in *Babell*:

They pryze no more than children's whistles
 All Mr. Rutherford's Epistles,
 Which they are pleas'd to call Romances
 Enthusiastick, brainsick fancies,
 And swear that he stole many of these
 From a she saint that's call'd Therese.¹

Through ironic use of Presbyterian persona, Pitcairne espoused the Episcopalian belief that their opponents' religious canon was nothing more than mere fiction. Crucially Presbyterian works are dismissed as romances, and this designation serves two purposes. Primarily it distinguishes their literature from that of the Episcopal canon which is more ancient and stable. The perception of romances in this period, and indeed for much of the eighteenth century, was that they were a cancerous form of literature which was capable of corrupting its readership. Although there were sophisticated romances, the genre itself was relatively unstable. This feeds into the second reason why the term was used. As a

¹ Archibald Pitcairne, *Babell: A Satirical Poem, on the Proceedings of the General Assembly in the Year MDCXCII*, ed., George Kinloch Maitland Club (Edinburgh, 1830), p. 24. From the Persona of the Laird of Brae, Pitcairne went on to demonstrate the Presbyterians perceived hatred of learning the heathen languages which was entirely superfluous to Christian learning, and the belief that this led to dry morality and nothing more from the Episcopal clergy. *Ibid.*, p. 24

new form of literature, Pitcairne attacked by implication, the relative youth of the Presbyterian movement, for the romance had no classical antecedent, in the same way that they themselves had come from nothing. *The Assembly* provides another critical appraisal of the Presbyterian system in the very genre – a play – which would antagonise them the most.

In order to promote his own civilised education and rich erudition, Pitcairne, as with his protégé Ruddiman, championed the Scoto-Latinist tradition, which through the efforts of the Episcopalians would keep Scotland firmly entrenched in the Republic of Letters. Pitcairne's Latin poetry was crucial in fostering this identity, and the quality of it was so high that it was a magnet for the English poets John Dryden and Matthew Prior, who translated his verse into English. Pitcairne was aware of these literary exchanges, and in a letter to John McKenzie, alluded to Prior's efforts. 'In 2 days I'll send in print to yow Mr Prior's Imitation of my *Gualterus Dannistouns ad amicos*, in English, which he bids me print with the Latin'.¹ Although the real badge of learning for the Episcopalians was a firm grasp of Latin, and the role of Greek in Scotland had been reduced to a subordinate position, the General Assembly under the control of the Presbyterians had forbidden the teaching of the language except as preparation for entry to university.² While this was yet another example to the Episcopalians of the ignorance of the Presbyterians, it was also of concern to the Presbyterians themselves in the eighteenth century. Alexander Dalzel, the professor of Greek at Edinburgh University also attributed

¹ Archibald Pitcairne to Mr John McKenzie, 26th February 1711, *The Best of Our Owne: The Letters of Archibald Pitcairne 1652-1713* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 66

² Although something of an Enlightenment backwater, the University of St Andrews did try to reform its instruction of the ancient languages in conjunction with its rhetorical training. In 1759 Greek and Latin were taught in the first year, with rhetoric introduced in the second. This was augmented with readings from Greek and Latin authors, and the practice of composition in both languages. R. G. Cant, *The University of St Andrews* (Edinburgh, 1946), p. 48; Thomas McCrie, *Life of Andrew Melville* (Edinburgh, 1899), pp. 357-358

Scotland's inferiority to England in Latin verse to the interference of the Presbyterians.

'If had not been for that confounded Solemn League and Covenant', he complained, 'we would have made as good longs and shorts as they'.¹ Despite Dalzel's complaints, and the attitude of some of the Episcopalians, there is little evidence that the Scottish Church under the Presbyterians was opposed to Latin verse. For example, in 1740 it recommended Arthur Johnston's paraphrase of the Song of Solomon as a learning text for schools.² This enhanced the existing classical standard in Scotland which saw the almost universal reading of George Buchanan's Psalms, which not only transmitted religious instruction into generations of schoolboys, but also accomplished it through the method of Latin and classical metre.

The Presbyterians in the late 1690s and early 1700s were not without their accomplishments however. Indeed even before this in the field of law Lord Stair's *Institutions of the Laws of Scotland* (1681), was not only the most influential legal treatise written in the country, but it also presented a Calvinist philosophical basis for Scots law on the grounds that reason dominated its pages, and not the royal authority of the King. Stair's Presbyterian leanings were clearly evident in the aftermath of the Test Act of 1681 which saw him join his fellow exiles in the Netherlands. This Dutch connection was ultimately to prove valuable to Scottish learning, and many of the Presbyterians, who returned to Scotland after William became King of England and Scotland, brought with them new and enlightened ideas for the improvement of their countrymen. The most important of these early figures was William Carstares, the friend and adviser to King William, who became the Principal of Edinburgh University in 1703,

¹ Lord Henry Cockburn, *Memorials of His Time* (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 109

² George Chalmers, *The Life of Thomas Ruddiman* (Edinburgh, 1794), p. 148

and began a correspondence with dissenting leaders in England, in order to attract more of their number to the Scottish Universities.¹ Before he became the Principal he had been concerned about the educational inadequacy of the Presbyterian ministers who were frequently attacked by the Episcopalians for their lack of learning and erudition. In order to remedy this problem Carstares attempted to encourage the appointment of professors from the University of Utrecht, which along with Leyden was an outpost for the Scots who were in exile. Carstares sought to establish a theological education akin to the system of the Protestant professor and minister in the Dutch Reformed Church Gijsbert Voet. Although this ultimately proved unsuccessful, Carstares did not neglect his original aims, and he instigated reforms at Edinburgh designed to improve the curriculum, most notably in 1708 when he appointed specialist teachers in the arts and divinity departments of the University, based upon the Dutch model which had abolished the regenting system. The removal of the regenting system paved the way for more specialist teaching, and at the same time began to move the universities away from the Knoxian vision of their function as a production factory for Presbyterian ministers. While educating the next generation of clergy was still of crucial importance in the university curriculum, it was tempered with an emerging enlightened ideal of a broad liberal education that would provide a blueprint for the individual preparing for citizenship, not just in Scotland but now, after the Union, within the wider polity of Britain and its Empire.

It was this broader and more liberal educational programme which helped to create an environment that was conducive to the dissemination of literary appreciation and polite learning. This appreciation spilled over into creation in the 1750s when John Home, a member of the moderate party in the Church of Scotland and Minister of

¹ EUL Laing MSS, La. II. 407

Athelstaneford composed his tragedy *Douglas*. The performance and subsequent publication of this work resulted in a fierce confrontation between two factions in a divided Church of Scotland. Too often the debate has been dismissed as the clash between the enlightened moderates defending the freedom of literary expression, and promoting the virtues of the stage, against the obstructionist popular party, warning against the vice of the stage and the frivolity of wasting time and money on the theatre. Certainly the controversy contains added spice on the grounds that *Douglas* was written by a member of the moderate clergy. Home fancied himself as something of a playwright, but his first play *Agis* was rejected by the London stage, as was *Douglas*, twice, before he finally managed to secure its debut at Edinburgh on December 14th 1756. Writing on the role of the theatre in Scotland, Alasdair Cameron has remarked that, ‘the controversy evoked by the play was an effective weapon in the hands of the liberal clergy and allowed them to ridicule the fundamentalists who attacked the stage; it provided an opportunity for the greatest minds of the day to rally round and support a cause which the majority of Edinburgh’s leading citizens took up’.¹ In certain respects this is true, and the opponents of the moderates seized upon the fact that a member of the clergy had taken the time to write a play as they believed it was inherently sinful not only for people to attend the theatre, but especially for a minister to actually write one. This did in fact lead to an outpouring of religious bile which on one level attacked the quality of the production, but on another was deployed specifically to denigrate the moderates themselves. A typical example of this is the anonymously published, *The Players Scourge: Or, A Detection of the Horrid Prophanity and Impiety of Stage Plays* (1757) which is little more than a vile

¹ Alasdair Cameron, ‘Theatre in Scotland 1660-1800’, in, Andrew Hook, ed., *The History of Scottish Literature Vol. 2 1660-1800* (Aberdeen, 1987), p. 199

tirade against the stage and those that acted upon it. In describing the sort of people that would frequent the stage, the pamphlet notes that, ‘they are the filth and garbage of the earth, the scum and stain of human nature, the excrements and refuse of all mankind, the pests and plagues of human society, the debauchers of mens minds and morals, unclean beasts, idolatrous Papists or atheists, and the most horrid and abandoned villains that ever the sun shone upon’.¹ When one is faced with this type of response it is understandable why historians have tended to view the writers against *Douglas* as representational of an anti-cultural movement, but this is to deny the literary qualities, and the powerful rhetoric of key figures in the popular party. The most notable of these men is John Witherspoon, a student of John Stevenson’s at Edinburgh University in the 1730s and a fellow undergraduate along with Carlyle, Blair and Robertson. As well as being the premier opponent of the moderates while he remained in Scotland, after his emigration to the new world, Witherspoon would go on to become, in the words of David Daiches, ‘the single most important educator in America in his time’.² Indeed his contribution to rhetoric and belles-lettres in the colonies was as important as the contribution made by Blair, the champion of the moderates’ conception of taste and polite literature. In fact, he is nothing less than an enigma in this regard, as he ferociously railed against the moderates, and their allies such as David Hume, as well as figures such as Francis Hutcheson, whose moral philosophy and aesthetic worldview, he utterly rejected. Yet, upon his arrival in

¹ Anon., *The Players Scourge: Or, a Detection of the Horrid Prophanity and Impiety of Stage Plays* (?), 1757), p. 1

² David Daiches, ‘John Witherspoon, James Wilson and the Influence of Scottish Rhetoric on America’, in, John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher eds., *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 167. Witherspoon’s lectures on rhetoric and eloquence influenced the American teaching system into the nineteenth century, and along with Blair, Campbell and Kames, ensured a strong Scottish rhetorical flavour in the American college system. See: S. Michael Halloran, ‘John Witherspoon on Eloquence’, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 17 (1987), pp. 177-192; J. Blake Scott, ‘John Witherspoon’s Normalizing Pedagogy of Ethos’ *Rhetoric Review* 16 (1997), pp. 58-75; Joe W. Kraus, ‘The Development of a Curriculum in the Early American Colleges’, *History of Education Quarterly* 1 (1961), pp. 64-76

America, he relented in his opinions to such a degree as to include both Hume and Hutcheson on his reading lists for his class at Princeton. As well as Witherspoon, the popular party could rely on the talents of John Erskine, another fellow student at Edinburgh under Stevenson, the Reverend John Maclaurin (1693-1754), and although not a minister, his nephew also John Maclaurin (1734-1796), later lord Dreghorn, who was the son of the Edinburgh University Mathematics professor Colin Maclaurin.¹ Reverend Maclaurin had been a candidate for the vacant Divinity chair at Glasgow University where, after an initial tied vote, he lost out to William Leechman.² The contest between the two can be seen as an early skirmish between the evangelicals and the moderates in the university. Francis Hutcheson backed his friend Leechman, believing that his appointment would offer the best opportunity for a liberal brand of theology to be taught at the university.³ Maclaurin may have run his classes in a more evangelical manner, but he was not without learning and erudition himself. His sermon *Glorying in the Cross of Christ* was widely regarded as the epitome of Scottish evangelical preaching in the eighteenth century.⁴ Maclaurin's collected sermons were even the subject of critical review in the first edition of the *Edinburgh Review* (1755). However there is a perceptible agenda in this literary production instigated by the moderates, which sought to establish a dominance of their polite style over that of their popular opponents, as well as that of the seceders. Maclaurin's writing style was subjected to the moderates' style of criticism and

¹ The Reverend John Maclaurin was also a fellow classmate of Francis Hutcheson at Glasgow. Colin was on familiar terms with the Glasgow Mathematician Robert Simson, but he was also on intimate terms with professors Stevenson and Mackie, both with whom he exchanged several letters.

² Thomas D. Kennedy, 'William Leechman', in, *Dictionary of National Biography* www.dnb.com

³ See Chapter 2

⁴ MacIntosh, *Church and Theology*, p. 50 He was also the author of the Ecclesiastical tract, *Nature of Ecclesiastic Government, and of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland Illustrated* (Glasgow, 1754). Although its main aim was to build a constitutional defence of the Popular position, Maclaurin demonstrated an impressive breadth of learning, which included reference to European authors such as Pufendorf, Montesquieu, and even Rollin.

the sermons were subsequently assessed as ‘plain and serious discourses, without warmth in the composition, or ornament in the stile’. Nevertheless the reviewer acknowledged that Maclaurin was a man who possessed certain literary qualities that the moderates would have approved of, for he stated, ‘in the second sermon, however, there are some lively strokes which shew that the author was not destitute of genius and fancy’.¹ The sermon to which the reviewer referred was his *Glorying on the Cross of Christ*, which demonstrates that the moderates were prepared to accept literary quality, albeit on their own terms, in their opponents’ writings. While literary appreciation was extended, to a degree, to the popular preachers, the moderates used the *Review* as a platform to both criticise their literary style and score some political points. Ebenezer Erskine’s sermons were also reviewed in this edition and were severely attacked not only for their poor composition, but for their meanness of spirit. ‘There is so little morality’, complained the reviewer, ‘and such a peevish and ill-natured spirit to be found in them; that we are sorry to say, they seem to be rather calculated to do harm than good; to expose religion to contempt and ridicule, instead of recommending the love and practice of it’.² Here under the guise of literary criticism, the moderates embarked on a more sinister condemnation of their opponents whose style, but more fundamentally, their religious outlook differed from their own. Unsurprisingly the sermons of William Robertson were upheld as the standard of excellence for an eloquent and effective preaching style. ‘We are likewise persuaded’, enthused the reviewer, ‘that to every reader of taste and judgment, this discourse will appear to be a very proper specimen of the great improvement that has

¹ ‘Sermons and Essays by the late Rev. John Maclaurin’, *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1755), p. 30

² ‘Sermons of Ebenezer Erskine’, *Edinburgh Review*, p. 39

been made in the art of preaching in this part of the united kingdoms'.¹ What the *Edinburgh Review* did, deliberately and unsubtly, was to denigrate the style of their adversaries, and to elevate their own concept of taste and eloquence. However, even they had to accept that their opponents in the Church, while not expressly cultivating a methodical system of taste, were capable of producing works of quality, and of more sophistication than with which they would wish to credit them. Even the more hard line evangelicals and opponents of the stage such as George Anderson, who most notably attempted to bring heresy charges upon Hume and Kames in the early 1750s, dealt with the problems of the stage in a far more erudite manner than resorting to the harangues of a zealot of which he has frequently, and sometimes justifiably been accused. However, Anderson was in fact responding to Allan Ramsay's attempts to set up a permanent theatre in Edinburgh in the 1730s, and not the Douglas controversy itself as he had died in 1756.² Nevertheless, the pamphlet war which erupted over this issue provides us with a unique opportunity to observe how the two sides deployed their rhetorical techniques and sharpened their literary critical approaches in order to convince their reading public of either the vices or virtues of both the stage in general and of the play itself.

The objection to the staging of plays was addressed by George Anderson in his 1733 work, *The Use and Abuse of Diversions: A Sermon on Luke XIX 13* which concerned itself primarily with the diminishing pleasure taken in religious Exercises at the expense of pleasure in 'vain and worldly Amusements'.³ Following this assessment, Anderson then devoted special attention to the stage, which he considered a corrupting

¹ 'Sermons of William Robertson', *Edinburgh Review*, pp. 42-43

² For more on the heresy charges which the two faced see Ian S. Ross, *Lord Kames and the Scotland of his Day* (London, 1972), pp. 152-160

³ George Anderson, *The Use and Abuse of Diversions: A Sermon on Luke XIX. 13* (Edinburgh, 1733), p. 30

influence on Christian morals and a sin to attend. He conceded that the Bible did not specifically ban plays, and he even accepted that virtue was praised, and vice was ridiculed by the stage. However, Anderson argued that the apostles stood against such artistic expression, and in his words, 'Apostolical Condemnation' was enough in itself to justify the prohibition of any productions.¹ More specifically he lamented that the very language used in plays ought to be condemned for they were false words spoken by false people, and therefore possessed no real virtue or truth.² Ultimately Anderson believed that the ornaments of eloquence which were displayed by artistic expression served only to distract mankind from their true purpose. In a warning to his readers over the ills of eloquence and flowery rhetoric, Anderson, in an unintentionally eloquent passage asked, 'And what did all the Wit and Wisdom, all the Posey and Prose, all the Eloquence and Oratory of the World avail towards the Reformation of Mankind, before the coming of our LORD JESUS? Nothing at all. The World grew worse rather than better, under all these polite Helps to Piety and Virtue. And after that in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe'.³ While Anderson was firmly against the stage, he was shrewd enough to realise that he would have to attack it through its strongest defence, which was the claim that it promoted virtue by the representation of good deeds and eloquent speeches that spoke to the hearts of the audience. In doing so Anderson also demonstrated a reasonable grasp of the ancient stage and its workings, although he sought ancient examples mainly to illustrate that they themselves objected to unsavoury elements of the theatre; for example, the Athenians entertaining a very mean opinion of comedies, and the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58

² *Ibid.*, p. 54

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58

Lacedaimonians having no time for tragedies.¹ Even George Turnbull, the Marischal College regent, who was certainly not against the stage, provided a warning about over exposure to plays. In the *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1740) he cautioned that the human nature to emulate, which was a positive benefit to mankind could also be dangerous if unregulated. The problem with the stage was that repeated imitations could produce habitual conformity to whatever people were imitating. Thus when actors themselves took to the stage night after night they had the potential to become like the character they were portraying. Turnbull recounted that Quintilian provided excellent advice with regard to this type of imitation, and that among them it frequently happened, ‘*imitatio in mores transit*’. This precondition of humans to naturally imitate, should also be tempered by regulation in writing, or style, but above all in life and manners.²

Anderson however, and those who had fought to stop Ramsay’s theatre venture in the 1730s had been replaced by a new breed of popular minister in the 1750s. Just as Richard Sher has pointed to the moderate literati of Scotland being born within a few years of each other, and coming of age around the same time, so too has Ned Landsman demonstrated that the phenomenon can also be observed of the evangelicals in the form of Erskine and Witherspoon, born in 1721 and 1723.³ Having been exposed at Edinburgh to the emerging disciplines of rhetoric and belles-lettres, both of these men displayed learning and intellect in their writings, which was precisely the reason why they were able to become the leading figures of the opposition to the moderates. Indeed, as Roger Emerson has reported, the future popular ministers were not only being taught theology

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40

² George Turnbull, *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (2 vols., London, 1740), I. p. 101

³ Sher, *Church and University*; Ned C. Landsman, ‘Presbyterians and Provincial Society: The Evangelical Enlightenment in the West of Scotland, 1740-1775’, in, John Dwyer and Richard B. Sher eds., *Sociability and Society in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1991), p. 194

in the universities, but were educated in a broad range of subjects such as Greek and Latin, rhetoric, and mathematics, as well as both natural and moral philosophy.¹ Therefore, by the time that the controversy over Douglas erupted, the evangelical and popular voice was more than capable of providing an eloquent and forceful opposition to the moderate party which effectively held a cultural stranglehold over Scottish letters even by the mid-1750s.

By far the most sophisticated proponent of the anti-Douglas camp was John Witherspoon. Carlyle recognised his talents from an early age, describing him as, ‘a good scholar, far advanced for his age, very sensible and shrewd’. Nevertheless he noted that he also possessed, ‘a disagreeable temper, which was irritated by a flat voice and awkward manner, which prevented his making an impression on his companions of either sex that was at all adequate to his ability’.² When Witherspoon did finally make an impression he hammered the moderates with a scathing and witty piece entitled *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1753) which savaged them and all that they stood for, while at the same time elevating Witherspoon’s own profile when it was revealed soon after publication that he was the author. This was not the first piece of popular literature to attack the values of the moderates, as John Willison in his *A Fair and Impartial Testimony, essayed in Name of a number of Ministers, Elders, and Christian People of the Church of Scotland* (1744) had done likewise in the previous decade.³ Willison despaired of the way in which clergymen, who in his eyes were unfit for purpose, had found positions within the universities of Scotland given to them by statesmen,

¹ Roger L. Emerson, ‘Scottish Universities in the Eighteenth Century, 1690-1800’, *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 167 (1977), pp. 453-477

² Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 30

³ John Willison, *A Fair and Impartial Testimony, Essayed in name of a number of Ministers, Elders, and Christian People of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1744)

magistrates and regents who had no real concern for Christianity. More alarming still, Willison lamented that those very men possessed suspect morals, and had little zeal for orthodoxy and piety. With a certain degree of anguish he asked, ‘When such Men are appointed to be Heads of Colleges, Professors of Sciences, Languages, or Divinity, for training up of young Men for the Ministry; what is to be expected from the Students under their Care, but many of them will be leven’d with bad Principles and Inclinations?’¹ Although there was a precedent set of challenging the moderates, the skill with which Witherspoon lampooned them, effectively by using their own weapons of erudition and smooth prose against them, meant that he was the most potent opponent of the moderate literati. In *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* he attacked what he saw as the failings of the moderate regime, through the ironic persona of a moderate minister. For example, when analysing the types of qualities that a preacher should possess, he stated that firstly, his subjects must be confined to social duties. Secondly he must recommend them from rational consideration, through the beauty and comely proportions of virtue, and its advantages in the present life, without any regard to a future state of more extended self interest. Thirdly, his authority must be drawn from heathen writers, none, or as few as possible ought to come from Scripture. His last observation was that he must be very unacceptable to the common people.² This in a nutshell encapsulates the grievances which the popular party had with the moderates. In particular, Witherspoon

¹ Willison, *Ibid.*, p. x. Although Willison was referring to the situation in general, the publication of this work came out in 1744 a year after the case heard before the General Assembly where William Leechman, the newly appointed Professor to the Chair of Divinity at the University of Glasgow faced charges of heresy for his writings. It is more than likely therefore, that it was Leechman specifically that Willison had in mind when he warned that the choice of unsuitable staff would lead to the corruption of young students. In the same passage, Willison specifically cites Professors of Divinity as figures who should not be chosen by statesmen and magistrates.

² John Witherspoon, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics: Or, The Arcana of Church Policy. Being an Humble Attempt to open up the Mystery of Moderation* (Glasgow, 1753), p. 15

made strenuous objections to the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson, which in his eyes sought to replace the teachings and truth of the scriptures with the works of the ancients. He also referred to Lord Shaftesbury, both directly and indirectly in this essay, as a corrupting force against the truth of religion. In the case of the younger generation who had sacrificed real learning for the ease of luxury and money, Witherspoon placed the blame most squarely on him. 'This I reckon they have either constitutionally, or perhaps have learned it from the inimitable lord Shaftesbury, who, in so lively a manner, sets forth the evil of universities, and recommends conversation with polite peripatetics, as the only way of arriving at true knowledge'.¹

More dangerous than the universities was the moderate style of preaching. Witherspoon believed that the moderates' insistence on harmony, order, taste, and the other ornaments of eloquence which they strove to include in their oratory detracted from the clear message of the Scriptures which if delivered in an honest and succinct manner would reach the hearts of an audience more surely than an empty style of rhetoric. Again, with Hutcheson firmly in his sights, although he extended his scope to include all moderates who would preach in this style, he stated:

And as to their being thought learned in their sermons by the vulgar, it is sufficient for that purpose that they be unintelligible. Scattering a few phrases in their sermons, as *harmony, order, proportion, taste, sense of beauty, balance of the affections*, etc. will easily persuade the people that they are learned: and this persuasion is to all intents and purposes the same thing as if it were true. It is one of these deceitful feelings which Mr. H_____, in his essays has shown to be so beautiful and useful. These phrases they may easily get in books, not above the size of an octavo; and if they incline to be very deep, they may get abundance

¹ *Ibid.*, p, 26

of citations from the antient heathen authors in Cudworth's Intellectual System, and mostly translated to their hand.¹

Witherspoon saw the moderates as providing nothing more than a smokescreen of learning which illustrated the deformity of their rhetorical system. For him, the polite man of letters served no purpose in the greater scheme of glorifying God, and the republic of letters which Blair would help to augment was symptomatic of his distaste for learning which served no useful purpose. Instead, Witherspoon stood firm to the ideal of the civic orator, a figure erudite in the same fashion as a polite man of letters, but designed more for action than for education for its own sake.² Witherspoon himself accepted that literary knowledge employed correctly could only enhance mankind's own piety. He spoke of the 'union of piety and literature', and was adamant that religiosity without human learning risked 'disgracing the most glorious truths, by a meanness and indecency... in their manner of handling them'.³ Indeed when he delivered his lectures on divinity at the College of New Jersey, he insisted upon this unity, stating, 'There is no branch of literature without its use. If it were possible for a minister to be acquainted with every branch of science, he would be more fit for public usefulness'.⁴ Public usefulness is the crucial issue for Witherspoon in that any literary studies which do take place must be used for the benefit of the community rather than the individual. Furthermore, it must not

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27

² Richard B. Sher has gone as far as to suggest that the division of civic humanism which can be found in Blair and Witherspoon accounts for the very different paths they went down, which led to Blair identifying himself as the educated individual in the republic of letters, but which resulted in Witherspoon and his students helping to create the American Republic. Richard B. Sher and Jeffery Smitten, *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 1990), p. 112

³ John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* (9 vols., Edinburgh, 1804-5), III, p. 105

⁴ Witherspoon, *Works*, VIII, p. 20. On Eloquence in general, he thinks of the term as a substitute for criticism stating: 'Eloquence; that is to say, composition and criticism, including the whole of what is commonly called the belles lettres study. Nothing is more plain than the necessity of this science. Public speaking is to be the chief, or one of the chief parts of a minister's business for life'. Witherspoon, *Works*, VIII, p. 27

distract him from his duties as a minister. In a sermon of 1758 he reminded his parishioners what they should expect from their religious leaders. ‘A minister should be separated and set apart from his own work; he should be consecrated to his office. It is little glory in him to be eminently skilled in any other science, except such as may be handmaids to theology, and are by him habitually turned into a divine channel’.¹ His position was similar to that of the lay popular party associate and lawyer Andrew Crosbie, who, in his *Thoughts of a Layman concerning Patronage and Presentations* (1769) asserted that it was the provision of the ministry to instruct people to appreciate the ‘true nature and end of religion’. Crosbie elaborated on what the qualifications of a minister ought to be, and while they were more in line with the popular writers of the previous generation his position is not as anti-cultural as it would first appear. Even Carlyle misunderstood the subtlety of his position, when he addressed the role which polite learning should play in a minister’s education.² Under Crosbie’s system polite literature and elegant erudition were held to be superfluous to this education; instead the true requirements for their duties were no more than, plain sense, a sincere heart, and a sufficient knowledge of practical divinity.³ Nevertheless, Crosbie did not entirely dismiss the power of polite education, because it had the benefit of raising the position of the minister within the community and it had the fundamental principle of making the minister more useful to his parishioners. The fact that Witherspoon too did not reject the role which letters had to play in an individual’s development is indicative of the way in

¹ Witherspoon, *Works*, V, p. 40

² Alexander Carlyle, *Usefulness and Necessity of a Liberal Education for Clergymen* (Edinburgh, 1793), pp. 1-2. One factor of note is that even though Crosbie’s words had been misinterpreted by some of his moderate opponents, the numbers of popular party ministers seeking to defend him over the position of the ‘uselessness’ of learning was non-existent.

³ Andrew Crosbie, *Thoughts of a Layman concerning Patronage and Presentations* (Edinburgh, 1769), p. 33

which the evangelicals viewed literacy in general. Indeed, as T. C. Smout has observed, illiteracy was looked upon as shameful within their culture, and those who were found to be illiterate undertook intensive lessons in order to ensure that they would achieve a level sufficient enough to be able to read the bible and other religious works.¹ In the aftermath of unrest following the Puritan era in England conservatives actually blamed popular literacy for the disturbances, but the Scots rejected the belief that stability depended on keeping the poor ignorant. Indeed this was merely the extension of the traditional Presbyterian system which attempted to set up a school in every Parish through the Settling of Parochial Schools Act (1696) in an attempt to bring literacy to the whole of the country. It also echoes the tradition in Presbyterian communities which located the minister as the intellectual and cultural source of knowledge. Therefore, in educating those who would become ministers a thorough knowledge of theology and to a lesser extent, but still necessary, the liberal arts, was essential. This was in sharp contrast to those who had seceded from the Church of Scotland. In 1763 the presbytery of Perth and Dunfermline dealt with the case of Laurence Wotherspoon, a student who had been charged for publishing an essay which contained grossly heretical sentiments. The essay, 'Reflections on the advantages of a liberal and polite education', had argued that a learned man would be best placed to 'dress himself in the lovely garments of charity and universal benevolence'.² The Synod, that is, the General Associate, or Anti-burgher Synod, saw differently and threatened Wotherspoon with excommunication. They

¹ T. C. Smout, 'Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *Past and Present* 97 (1982), pp. 114-27. See also R. A. Houston, *Scottish Literacy and Scottish Identity* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 45-49; and, Anthony Cooke, *From Popular Enlightenment to Lifelong Learning: A History of Adult Education in Scotland 1707-2005* (Leicester, 2006)

² Laurence Wotherspoon, quoted in, John McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow, 1841), p. 288

believed that polished taste and philosophical refinement would lead to the creation of showy and insipid preachers, whom the people would not be able to understand, and therefore could derive no benefit. In this respect they shared the outlook of the popular party who had chosen to remain within the Church, and directed their complaints against the moderates.

There was an abundant supply of this class already to be found within the pale of the National Church, to whom all the lovers of metaphysics and of belles lettres might, if they pleased, resort; and, for the synod to have increased the number, would have been frustrating one of the main designs of the Secession.¹

While the seceders took a dim view of those flaunting their acquaintance with belles-lettres, they acknowledged, along with members of the popular party that the real aim in training a man for the ministry was to instil in him sound scriptural views of theology, a general acquaintance with literature, and personal piety.² This acceptance that a general understanding of literature went hand in hand with personal piety echoed the sentiments that Witherspoon wished to promote in future ministers. However, while the seceders and the popular party imagined an overly liberal education as a potential danger to the Presbyterian religion, in other quarters it was seen as a necessity to defend the cause from revivalist interference.

The defence of this style of Presbyterian thought is most easily detectable in the American colonies, and not, surprisingly, through the efforts of Witherspoon, but over two decades before he set foot in the country, in the form of the Reverend Francis Alison (1705-1779), a Scots-Irish Presbyterian minister. Alison was yet another student of John Stevenson's at Edinburgh, who graduated in 1732, but who also became acquainted with

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 292-3

² *Ibid.*, p. 293

Francis Hutcheson, so much so, that they exchanged correspondence after Alison had left for America.¹ In 1742 Alison is recorded as teaching English grammar, composition and literature at the academy at New London, Maryland.² His reasons for doing so were to preserve the foundations of 'Old Side' Presbyterianism, a group who were opposed to the evangelism which encouraged fire and brimstone pulpit oratory, and religious enthusiasm of the worst kind.³ Their opponents were known as the 'New Siders'. The New Siders were opposed to the importation of classical ideals into the education system, and were determined to counter this dangerous trend by establishing a series of colleges throughout North America. In his teachings, Alison borrowed extensively from both Hutcheson and Stevenson. From Hutcheson, Alison imitated his technique of making his students provide abstracts and abridgements of essays from English literary sources, while from Stevenson he incorporated the technique of comparing classical authors with modern French and English ones.⁴ It is possible that Alison may have taken the technique from Stevenson, just as much as he did from Hutcheson, for on the Edinburgh professor's course there were written abridgements of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human*

¹ For more on Francis Alison in America, and the influence of Scottish rhetoric and belles-lettres see, Franklin E. Court, 'The Early Impact of Scottish Literary Teaching in North America', in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 138-145. See also, Andrew Hook, 'Scottish Academia and the Invention of American Studies', in, Robert Crawford, ed., *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 164-179; *Scottish Rhetoric and its Influences*, ed., Lynsee Lewis Gaillet (New Jersey, 1998); Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America* (Glasgow, 1975). Even the great Thomas Jefferson received his first instruction in literary criticism from a Scot, William Small, who had been educated at Marischal College and made professor of Natural Philosophy at William and Mary College in 1758. Jefferson remarked of him, 'Fortunately the philosophical chair became vacant soon after my arrival at the college, and he was appointed to fill it *per interim*, and he was the first who ever gave, in that college, regular lectures in ethics, rhetoric and belles lettres'. *Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, eds., Adrienne Koch & William Peden, (New York, 1944), pp. 4-5

² Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal* (New York, 1971), p. 75

³ For more on the New/Old Side debate in America see: D. G. Hart, 'Old Side/New Side: Schism and Reunion', in, S. Donald Forston III, ed., *Colonial Presbyterianism: Old Faith in a New Land* (New Jersey, 2007), pp. 157-179

⁴ Sloan credits Alison with introducing Hutcheson's ideas to the new world, as well as noting that both of these men promoted a civic humanism which located society and the bonds of social commitment as a learning stage for the observation of proper human conduct. Sloan, *Scottish Enlightenment*, p. 88

Understanding and the Aristotelian logic of Heineccius, which in a similar fashion to Hutcheson, he would then explain and correct.¹ Therefore in this instance one can observe the use of rhetoric and belles-lettres in the defence of a religious way of life when faced with the fanaticism perpetrated by religious extremists. This marriage of polite education with moral action was something to which Witherspoon himself would have subscribed.

Even before he went to America he was renowned as something of a belletrist. A graduate of the college of New Jersey, Benjamin Rush, who was in Edinburgh studying medicine when Witherspoon was in the process of being offered the job as President, was fearful when he heard rumours that the Paisley Minister would turn it down.² In a letter to his classmate, John Baynard Smith, which still entertained thoughts of Witherspoon accepting the position, he remarked:

I have dined and supped frequently with him here in Edinburgh; and am charmed with his Behaviour. He appears to be Mr Davies and Dr Finely revived in one man. [The previous two presidents of the college] In point of Genius he is equal to the first, and in knowledge I believe he is superior even to Dr Finely himself, more especially in that Branch of Knowledge which is now a days so much admired viz: the Belles-Lettres. I have heard him preach twice, and can truly say he exceeds any Preacher I have heard since I came to Scotland.³

While Witherspoon was renowned as a man of letters by the time he arrived in New Jersey, he provided the most erudite and forceful criticism of the whole Douglas debate in 1757 which he published as an essay entitled *A Serious Enquiry into the Nature and*

¹ Jeffrey R. Smitten, 'John Stevenson', in, *Dictionary of National Biography* www.dnb.com

² Rush would ultimately go on to become one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence. Witherspoon would become the only clergyman to do so. For more on Rush, as well as an account of his rhetorical abilities see: Wade Williams, 'Religion, Science and Rhetoric in Revolutionary America: The Case of Dr. Benjamin Rush', *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30 (2000), pp. 55-72

³ Benjamin Rush to John Baynard Smith, Letter of April 30, 1767, quoted in, Varnum Lansing Collins, *President Witherspoon: A Biography* (2 vols., Princeton, 1925), I, p. 84

Effects of the Stage. Here the witheringly sarcastic tone with which he lambasted the moderates was gone, and instead was replaced with an earnest appeal to his readers to adhere to the seriousness of his message, and the very real dangers that he believed there to be in attending the stage. He alluded to the fact that the current vogue was to gratify public taste by raising up an allegorical structure, and then to handle the subject with wit and humour. This style of writing would be far more appropriate for correction than for instruction, which was his main goal in this instance.¹ There was a precisely calculated reason on his part for setting out his argument in this way for it mirrored his objections to the stage itself. The problem which Witherspoon identified was the issue of whether the primary and immediate intention of the stage was to provide instruction or to entertain, in its attempts to make men wise and good. Therefore the entire framework for his argument was presented in a straightforward and unambiguously plain style which sought to provide the truth, rather than entertain in the manner in which he wrote the *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*. He was firmly of the opinion that the purpose of the stage, first and foremost, had always been to entertain. Again Witherspoon cited Shaftesbury as the modern author who most explicitly promulgated this view.

A modern author of high rank and reputation [Shaftesbury], who would not willingly hurt the cause, considers them in this light, and this alone, and represents their improvement, not as lying in their having a greater moral tendency, but in the perfection of the poet's art, and the refinement of the taste of the audience. It is only of late that men have begun to dignify them with a higher title. Formerly they were ever considered as an indulgence of pleasure, and an article of luxury, but now they are exalted into schools of virtue, and represented as bulwarks against vice.²

¹ Witherspoon, *A Serious Enquiry*, pp. 3-4

² *Ibid.*, p. 13

Witherspoon's objection here was that plays themselves were attracting such attention because of the cultural domination of a select group. This group was of course the moderate literati who were exerting this disproportionate influence on the power of the stage. In this regard Witherspoon was of the same opinion as John Maclaurin, Lord Dreghorn, who also possessed an appreciation of the classics and a taste for literature, while at the same time he rejected the cultural agenda of the moderates.

Maclaurin published three times in response to *Douglas*, once in verse, once as an essay response, and once in the form of a three act play which spoofed not only John Home, but the philosophy of David Hume and the entire cultural programme of the moderates. Maclaurin was enraged that the moderates had assumed total control of taste and learning in Scotland. In his *Apology for the Writers against the Tragedy of Douglas* (1757) he outlined the problem for those men of letters who did not share the moderates' cultural outlook. 'Some years ago, a few gentlemen in this town assumed the character of being the only judges in all points of literature; they were and still are styled the *geniuses*, and lately erected what they called a *select society*, which usurps a kind of aristocratical government over all men and matters of learning'.¹ In particular, he rejected the moderates' focus on the correctness of style, and as he saw it, their preoccupation with grammar. Under these rules, Maclaurin believed that even if natural genius was apparent in a piece of work, the whole production could be dismissed by the moderates for the pedantic reason of a slip in syntax or a grammatical error. To his horror, this was the indignity which Shakespeare had suffered at the hands of the 'Coryphaeus' of this group (Hume), in his *History of Great Britain*. Likewise this elitist group had also attacked

¹ John Maclaurin, *Apology for the Writers Against the Tragedy of Douglas with some Remarks on that Play* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. 4

Joseph Addison, whom Maclaurin considered one of the finest writers that England had produced. The moderates had ‘cast him like a useless weed away’, argued Maclaurin, before warning his readers: ‘If you believe them, there are ten errors in every page of his *Spectators*; and the above mentioned author has a copy of them, in which this Decalogue of errors in every page is marked with his own hand’.¹ Maclaurin was being unfair to the moderates and their allies on this occasion, for Hugh Blair in particular would go on to make Addison and his *Spectator* a cornerstone of his own brand of literary criticism.² He also directly contradicted Maclaurin’s assertion that the moderates had a pedantic obsession with grammatical fault-finding. In his introduction to his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters* (1783) Blair commented,

As rhetoric has been sometimes thought to signify nothing more than the scholastic study of words, and phrases, and tropes, so criticism has been considered as merely the art of finding faults; as the frigid application of certain technical terms, by means of which persons are taught to cavil and censure in a learned manner. But this is the criticism of pedants only. True criticism is a liberal and humane art. It is the offspring of good sense and refined taste.³

¹ *Ibid.*, p.4

² Blair acknowledged Addison as an arbiter of good taste and the recognition of genius in his lectures, and referenced him specifically in both instances. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, (3 vols., Dublin, 1783), I, pp. 30, 54. However Blair did provide four critical examinations on Addison’s style in the *Lectures* focusing on Issues 411-414 of the *Spectator*. Although Blair had not even begun to lecture during the period in which Maclaurin was attacking the moderates, he does make allusion to the inaccuracies in his composition of which Maclaurin was accusing his fellows. Speaking on Addison Blair remarked, ‘I have formerly given the general character of Mr. Addison’s Style and manner, as natural and unaffected, easy and polite, and full of those graces which a flowery imagination diffuses over writing. At the same time, though one of the most beautiful writers in the Language, he is not the most correct; a circumstance which renders his composition the more proper to be the subject of our present criticism. The free and flowing manner of this amiable writer sometimes led him into inaccuracies, which the more studied circumspection and care of far inferior writers have taught them to avoid. Remarking his beauties, therefore, as I shall have frequent occasion to do as I proceed, I must also point out his negligences and defects. Without a free and impartial discussion of both the faults and beauties which occur in his composition, it is evident, this piece of criticism would be of no service: and, from the freedom which I use in criticising Mr. Addison’s Style, non can imagine, that I mean to depreciate his writings, after having repeatedly declared the high opinion which I entertain of them’. Blair, *Lectures*, II, p. 59

³ *Ibid.*, p. 10

It is ironic that Maclaurin viewed the moderates as the peddlers of pedantic criticism when there was perhaps a more obvious target in the form of Thomas Ruddiman and his grammatical criticism. This being the case it would seem that Maclaurin had a specific agenda with regard to the moderates. And this agenda is most explicitly realised in *The Philosopher's Opera* (1757).¹ The work contains an abundance of classical learning, and the critique itself is delivered in the form of a three act play. Crucially, although he was attacking the play and the support of the moderates for it, he was using the very same medium to fuel his own arguments. In response to Hume's belief that the author of the *Douglas* had valued him higher than Shakespeare and Otway, Maclaurin was derisory: 'Remember the barbarism of Shakespear, the licentiousness of Otway, and that the author of DOUGLAS has been preferred to both'.² While this may appear to be the raging criticism of unenlightened religion at the productions of stage literature, he is in fact commenting on the words of Hume who argued that his friend possessed the, 'true theatric genius of Shakespeare and Otway, refined from the unhappy barbarism of the one and the licentiousness of the other'.³ He then went on to demonstrate a subtle shade to his critical appreciation of Shakespeare, although admittedly he lost no opportunity to savage the moderates at the same time:

Everyman who has felt exquisite pleasure in reading the works of Shakespeare and Otway, makes them but a very ungrateful return, if he tamely looks on while they are hunted down by a set of men who owe their title of geniuses to the courtesy of Scotland alone.⁴

¹ Hume's biographer Ernest Campbell Mossner was one of the few men to write about the *Philosopher's Opera*, and while his main focus was Hume, he was not entirely unappreciative of the wit and literary skill of Maclaurin. Ernest Campbell Mossner, 'Hume and the Scottish Shakespeare', *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 3 (1940), pp. 419-441

² John Maclaurin, *The Philosopher's Opera* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. iii.

³ David Hume, *Four Dissertations* (London, 1757), pp. v-vi

⁴ Maclaurin, *Philosopher's Opera*, p. iv. Maclaurin's critical style is an intriguing mix of elements of belles-lettres style criticism and poetical expression. For example his *Essays in Verse* (1769) he criticizes

It is worth noting here that the most famous English critic of his generation Samuel Johnson was also not a fan of the production, and dismissed it with the terse remark that there were not ten good lines in the whole play.¹

Although Maclaurin was happy to attack Home over the fact that he was a Minister who had written a play, he did temper this with some legitimate criticisms as to the quality of the performance. Maclaurin actually went as far as to say that he would have rejoiced to see a fellow countryman excel in tragedy, even if he were a clergyman, and if the tragedy had been good, he would have admired it accordingly.² What he really objected to was its over hyped promotion by the moderates, which was, ‘by this society extolled with all the noise of declamation; and the little merit it had, exaggerated with all the amplifications of bombast’.³ Witherspoon spoke of it in exactly the same terms when he wrote that, ‘it is a work of very little merit’.⁴ In particular Maclaurin rejected the characterisation of the villain, Glenalvon, and pointed out that he was a very bad imitation of Iago. The reasons for his inferiority according to Maclaurin were the ways in which his character exposed the machinery of the play, rendering him unbelievable. Firstly he has to openly persuade his targets into a jealous fit, which obliterates the

the fraudulent elements of the Ossianic poetry. ‘Verses to Miss ---- Written in a blank leaf of the fragments of Irish poetry, published by McPherson’. In, ‘Advice to a Young POET’ he makes reference to Blackwell’s *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735) ‘HOMER, of bards, the venerable fire; / Was, if to *Blackwell* credit we allow, / Precisely what an Irish harper’s now; / For, void of fight, and miserably poor, / He, harp on shoulder, stroll’d from door to door’. p. 9 He also takes issue with the English critic Johnson ‘On Johnson’s Dictionary’, where he constructs a poem using the most outlandish words from his Dictionary to express his displeasure at the over-refinement of language which Johnson is creating, which detracts from the plain message simply spoken. In this respect Maclaurin is not so very far away from the moderate literati who also seek a plain and simple style of diction.

¹ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, ed., John Croker (London, 1848), p. 300

² Maclaurin, *Apology*, p. 3

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5 Maclaurin went as far as to concede that the play constituted a ‘tolerable modern tragedy’, but would grant it no more than that. He even lambasted Home’s poetical efforts, labeling one, ‘perhaps the worst poem [that] ever was written in this country by a man of a liberal education’.

⁴ Witherspoon, *Serious Enquiry*, p. 71

subtlety of the villain's repertoire, a trait that Iago most certainly possesses. At every turn Maclaurin draws a parallel with an existing play, and actually advocates the same type of comparative criticism as Lord Kames; however, because this is only a short critical piece, he cannot go into the same depths of psychological analysis that his fellow member of the bench would go on to do a few years later. It is also well worth noting here that David Hume, who was more often than not a target for Maclaurin's barbs actually agreed with him over the problems with the main villain. 'Glenalvon's character', he concluded, 'is too abandoned. Such a man is scare in nature'.¹ Furthermore, Lord Barnet's² character hovered between vice and virtue, in a way not sufficiently theatrical or tragic. Clearly Hume was too observant to miss these discrepancies even if he did enthuse about the play more than it merited. Maclaurin also listed a number of internal inconsistencies which occurred in the course of the play, but intriguingly, one of the main flaws he picked up on was the age discrepancy between Glenalvon and Lady Randolph, where he argued that it was monstrous to make him fall in love with her. Maclaurin went on to deploy this with comedic effect in *The Philosopher's Opera* where David Hume's alter-ego Mr Genius falls in love with Sarah Presbytery – two hundred years his senior. Another crucial flaw of the play is the main character himself. Douglas was 'woefully bungled', and despite the 'dreadful noise made about him in the prologue' failed to deliver what had been promised. Maclaurin was unusually light on detail in this instance, and satisfied himself with the scathing remark, 'The most that you can say for him is, that he was in a fair way

¹ David Hume, quoted in, Henry Mackenzie, *An Account of the Life and Writings of John Home, Esq.* (Edinburgh, 1822), p. 100. This did not save Hume from the criticisms of Sir Walter Scott who stated that: 'David Hume was no good judge of poetry; had little feeling for it; and examined it by the hackneyed rules of criticism; which, having crushed a hundred poets, will never, it may be prophesied, create, or assist in creating, a single one'. Sir Walter Scott, 'Review of Mackenzie's edition of *Works of John Home, Esq.*', *Quarterly Review* XXXVI (1818), pp. 193-194

² In the original Edinburgh production, the Randolphs were the Barnets, but owing to the latter sharing its name with a village near London, Home made the change for a fear of laughter at it.

to have been a hero, but died in apparency'.¹ He rounded off his criticisms of the play by providing an analysis of its language and style, where again he illustrated his points via the method of comparative criticism. Maclaurin again took the words of Hume, when he promulgated the notion that Home's language was more refined than Shakespeare's, and turned them on their head when compared to the Bard. He identified Home's overuse of alliteration in the play, which Shakespeare had exploded in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with his ridiculing of *aliteratio*, as Maclaurin termed it.² While he frequently used his literary vehicles to attack the moderates, the criticisms which he provided in them do constitute an alternative to the cultural orthodoxy. His efforts are all the more remarkable because he was one of the few men affiliated with the popular party who actually attempted to engage with *Douglas* for the quality of its production, rather than dismiss it out of hand simply because it had been performed on the stage. In doing so he and Witherspoon offered a solid critical opposition to the moderates who would have had a virtual monopoly if not for their efforts.

While the popular party were quick to condemn the play both morally and critically, their supporters were out in force to defend the work. Although not a moderate himself, the clergyman Robert Wallace steadfastly defended it and was clever enough to use the laws of the General Assembly against the bigoted arguments of the evangelicals.³

¹ Maclaurin, 'Apology', p. 12

² The lines to which he is referring are, 'With blade, with bloody blameful blade, / He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast'.

³ Although it would be inappropriate to label Wallace a moderate in the same vein as a Robertson or a Blair, he nevertheless demonstrated enlightened conduct in most instances. A learned man, he wrote *A Dissertation on the Numbers of Mankind in Antient and Modern Times* (1753) which was a response to David Hume's 'On the Populousness of Antient Nations', originally published in *Political Discourses* (1752). Although Wallace sided with the ancients and Hume with the moderns in size of population, both remained on good terms with the other. In fact when Hume attempted to secure the chair of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1744-45 Wallace was the only clergyman to support him, even when more

Though he freely admitted the stage was most likely immoral, he nevertheless presented illuminating evidence on the validity of traditional religious beliefs. He went as far back as 1574, the year in which the General Assembly was determined to ban comedies, tragedies and histories about the Scriptures. While writers of such plays should be punished, plays not about Scripture should be examined before they were propounded publicly.¹ In this light Wallace made it appear that adherence to traditional beliefs could not only be unenlightened; it could be hundreds of years out of date.² The fact that the religious apologists for the play refrained from praising the virtue of the stage itself indicated that they still had to tread carefully against their popular opponents. One must therefore be cautious of accepting the words of Hugo Arnot when he trumpeted, ‘that extravagant and unsuccessful attempts to enslave the minds of men, must be productive of increasing liberality of sentiment’.³ Certainly the moderates were on the ascendancy, but their success in this matter was far from inevitable. One of the most sophisticated defenders of *Douglas*, Adam Ferguson, also sought to reconcile the production of stage plays with existing precedents in Christian history.⁴ As James Fordyce attempted to rehabilitate rhetoric by demonstrating the apostle Paul’s use of it in his own orations, so Ferguson endeavoured to recover poetic expression and literary appreciation through the

seemingly natural allies such as Francis Hutcheson were adding their considerable support in opposition to Hume.

¹ H. Sefton, ‘Reverend Robert Wallace: An Early Moderate’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 16 (1966), p. 20 Wallace was also fundamental in trying to stop the heresy accusations against David Hume and Lord Kames from coming to trial. Although Wallace was broad minded he did feel that his younger brethren, such as Hugh Blair and William Robertson went too far on the issue of cultural Enlightenment. See: Sher, *Church and University*, p. 154

² Wallace was also a member of the Rankenian Club which was greatly concerned with questions of literature and polite taste. See Chapter 3

³ Hugo Arnot, *History of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1779), p. 378

⁴ At one stage Ferguson was planning to write a treatise on eloquence or composition, however he never did bring his proposed project to fruition. Alexander Wedderburn alluded to this project when he wrote to Gilbert Elliot, ‘Ferguson is writing a very ingenious System of Eloquence or Composition in general’. Alexander Wedderburn to Gilbert Elliot of Minto, 2 July 1757, NLS MS 11008, fols., 58-59

man most often endorsed by the popular party as the hammer of polite learning. Ferguson noted that when Paul preached in Athens, he quoted a line from one of the Greek poets named Aratus. (Acts xvii. 28) 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being'. Paul's recourse to poetry to aid his argument illustrated that he was in Ferguson's words, 'sensible of the instructions and good impressions which we may receive from poetry', while his understanding of the poetic impact permitted him to, 'apply it so properly to those purposes'.¹ Ferguson's use of Paul sought to counter the criticisms of his opponents who inevitably deployed him as the most prominent anti-stage Biblical authority.² More often than not, the response to such a manoeuvre brought the wrath of the extreme evangelicals, who merely quoted chapter and verse back at the moderate man, in order to secure their position through the power of the Scriptures.³ However the Reverend Harper, author of *Some Serious Remarks on a Late Pamphlet entitled, The Morality of Stage-Plays Seriously Considered* (1757) offered a more learned criticism of Ferguson's piece while still remaining close to the popular party line. Rather than simply dismiss his opponent as an infidel, Harper took him to task over his style and composition, as well as

¹ Adam Ferguson, *The Morality of Stage Plays* (Edinburgh, 1757) p. 4. Ferguson went on to demonstrate a clear grasp of the differences that tragedy and comedy had with regard to implanting morals in people. comedy lay in exposing to just ridicule the follies and vices of ordinary men, while tragedy represented the actions of great men, recounting distressing and often dramatic situations in their life. Therefore, every tragedy contained instruction in the same manner as a parable or a fable, which differed only in its effect. 'In a Parable, we wait for the moral till the story is concluded, when the whole appears to have been an illustration of some moral precept; in a good Tragedy, we have a continued moral from beginning to end; the characters, the sentiments, and the observations, which come from the persons who speak, [and] are calculated to move and instruct us'. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8

² The Edinburgh Actor and Director John Jackson also used Paul to defend the stage. John Jackson, *The History of the Scottish Stage: From its First Establishment to the Present Time* (Edinburgh, 1793), p. 318

³ One anonymous response to Ferguson's essay was at least magnanimous enough to concede that it was 'a tolerable production', however in his attempts to knock down Ferguson's points the author proceeded to list every biblical reference he could find to bolster the position of the anti-Stage movement. Having done this, the author then set about providing every piece of anti-Stage legislation that he could think of which had been passed from the beginning of the Church to the present day. Anon., *The Immorality of Stage Plays In General and of the Tragedy Called Douglas in Particular* (Edinburgh, 1757). For a similar example of this see: Anon., *Douglas, A Tragedy, Weighed in the Balance, and Found Wanting* (Edinburgh, 1757)

the more conventional religious differences. He depicted his opponent as more of a 'Master of Language, than of Logick, and to have studied more the Smoothness of his Stile, than the Truth of his Narrative, or the Force of his Arguments'.¹ Harper even went on to provide further examples in the bible where the heathen poets had provided literary material, adding to the stock which Ferguson had accounted for in his essay. However, the number of times that they had augmented the biblical text was largely an irrelevancy, because it was inevitable, in Harper's eyes, that they would stumble upon an expression which was both true and wise every once in a while. This certainly did not mean that both of the authors should be viewed as possessing equal authority. Harper continued to criticise Ferguson, but opened out his remarks to include a rebuke for all of the belletristic critics who were using the Bible. In his opinion, there was now an overabundance of people who were reading the Scriptures for purposes other than they were intended; reading them as one would read a newspaper or a romance, and then only for curiosity or merely for the sake of history or amusement.² As with George Anderson decades before, Harper was keen to use the best of the ancients as examples of men who rejected plays, in this case Cicero. According to Harper, Cicero hated poor quality plays stating, 'Licentious Plays and Poems, [were] the Bane of Sobriety and an Hinderance to wise Thinking'.³ While he was right to identify Cicero's concerns over substandard literature he took the quote itself out of context. Cicero actually accepted that quality literature was a joy which had a rightful place in society. Plays themselves could either be virtuous or unvirtuous but they were all subordinate to the virtuous and practical arts of

¹ Reverend Mr. Harper, *Some Serious Remarks on a Late Pamphlet entitled, The Morality of Stage-Plays Seriously Considered* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. 2

² *Ibid.*, p. 11

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20

politics and governance. Harper too, was not as hard-line as some in the Church of Scotland, as he allowed for appropriate diversions and recreations, although he insisted that these activities had to be conducive to health, vigour and activity, as well as to concentrate on the improvement of the mind and the manners of an individual.¹

One of the greatest victims of the *Douglas* controversy was not actually Home himself, but his friend and defender of the play Alexander Carlyle. Carlyle attended the performance of *Douglas* and also wrote a satirical piece defending the play entitled, *An Argument to Prove that the Tragedy of Douglas ought to be Publickly Burnt by the Hands of the Hangman* (1757). The piece proved to be too satirical for its own good, as many of the opponents of the stage used Carlyle's ironic arguments in earnest. An example of this inability of his opponents to grasp his irony, was contained in Carlyle's opinion on the virtuous benefits of literature. 'I know it is pernicious to the morals of men, and altogether inconsistent with true religion. As I likewise believe, that puppet-shews, ballads in dialogue, romances, fictions of poets, not to mention musick, and painting, and whatever else imitates the passions and manners of men, absolutely unlawful, and tend to make us in love with lying vanities'.² For those who rejected the growth of belles-lettres in Scotland, Carlyle's arguments, which were meant to appear absurd, in fact appeared perfectly reasonable to the hard line opponents of *Douglas*. Worse was in store for Carlyle, as he was summoned before the Presbytery to account for his actions in going to see the play. Instead of keeping a low profile he decided to fight his case. Carlyle

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24 He went on to question whether useful knowledge and literature were in a better state in the present age, or whether it was located in a bygone era. He concluded by arguing that the present age had much to learn from the past, and ultimately questioned that if the stage was conducive to an increase in literature, why had both Oxford and Cambridge banned it from their vicinity. *Ibid.*, p. 28

² [Alexander Carlyle], *An Argument to Prove that the Tragedy of Douglas ought to be Publickly Burnt by the hands of the Hangman* (Edinburgh, 1757), p. 5

mentioned that his advocate Andrew Pringle was in his opinion, the most eloquent man in Scotland.¹ In this case the eloquence fit for the bar secured a victory of sorts for Carlyle, but it was not the total victory for which his moderate associates were hoping. The Assembly forbade the clergy from attending the theatre, but as the initial unease over *Douglas* passed, it was eventually ignored and neglected.

The end to the *Douglas* debate did not lay the groundwork for a subsequent literary battle between the moderates and the popular party, but it did pave the way for a more enlightened exchange between the two sides. As the moderates brought in a new cultural agenda, so too did members of the popular party bring fresh ideas and more enlightened thinking into their modes of thought. This assessment is not all that surprising, given that there was room within the Calvinist system to accommodate an appreciation of the fine arts, including the benefits of a powerful rhetorical system, as well as an understanding of the classical authors and literature in general. The moderates and their intellectual allies may have been the cultural leaders in Scotland, and the men who created the new system of rhetoric and belles-lettres, but that system was made richer by their debates with the popular party.

¹ Carlyle, *Autobiography*, p. 330

CONCLUSION

Although any assessment of the Scottish Enlightenment will naturally gravitate towards its 'golden age' in the latter part of the eighteenth century, the early stages of this movement should not be neglected, or dismissed as merely a preparation for the flowering of the Scottish intellectual achievement. As this thesis has demonstrated Scotland was a country that engaged intellectually both with England, and with Europe not only in the early part of the eighteenth century but also in the seventeenth century, while at the same time it sustained a culture that was capable of original thinking and scientific investigation. It was thanks to the efforts of men such as Thomas Blackwell, John Stevenson and Francis Hutcheson who created the right conditions for their students George Campbell, Hugh Blair and Adam Smith to take rhetoric and literary criticism to new heights in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Blackwell's key role in Homeric studies, not only changed the way that history writing was constructed, it also established a new literary critical practice which emphasised scientific principles that were a hallmark of the Aberdonian Enlightenment. Blackwell was a vital figure in the establishment of the Scottish Enlightenment on a Europe-wide level, owing to the success of his work on Homer. Although this book was Blackwell's key text, he also produced original works on the role of mythology, and the Court of Augustus, both of which blended empirical enquiry with literary investigation and appreciation. This scientific system was found in the works of David Fordyce, even in his observations on the correct method for preaching the gospel, as well as his plan for a comprehensive modern education, and it formed a part of Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. George Turnbull's works also promoted empirical evidence as a means to

studying the nature of man, but acknowledged the work of Francis Hutcheson as one of the main influences on his own writings. In this respect Turnbull has suffered on the periphery of the enlightenment canon, his achievements going almost unnoticed under the shadow cast by the early Enlightenment giant that was Hutcheson. Although his university career was short, Turnbull deserves recognition for the innovative reforms which he introduced to Marischal College, such as his decision to lecture in English at the expense of Latin, an innovation which he shared with Hutcheson. He also merits investigation for his influence over Thomas Reid, one of the most original minds to emerge from Aberdeen in the next generation.

The importance of Francis Hutcheson at Glasgow has never really been in doubt, but the impact of his aesthetics on literary productions adds another dimension to his influence. His aesthetic investigations informed Adam Smith's understanding of the moral sense, and also aided him in his explorations into the study of rhetoric and belles-lettres. Hutcheson's aesthetic sensibility also contributed to William Leechman's own enlightened brand of theology and literary appreciation. Despite publishing nothing other than his Sermons, he educated an entire generation of the ministry who were instructed both with a thorough grounding of eloquence fit for the pulpit, but also with an appreciation for literature and the arts, which instilled enlightenment values in a west of Scotland ministry previously renowned for its extremism.

Hutcheson's work on aesthetics also reached Edinburgh, where students began to incorporate his teachings into their own embryonic literary investigations. In this respect they were greatly aided by John Stevenson, one of the most influential men in the country in the field of rhetoric and literary criticism. The sheer number of men that Stevenson

taught who went on to become prominent belletrists is a testament to his own skills in transmitting a love of literature and learning into his students. Although he had a solid background in the classics Stevenson was not afraid to break with classical tradition, and one of the defining characteristics was his desire to analyse modern literature, which he did by investigating works such as the *Spectator* as well as modern authors such as John Locke. The fact that the two most prominent men in the field of belles-lettres in Britain and America, Hugh Blair and John Witherspoon, were students of his only serves to reinforce the massive influence that he exerted on the direction which rhetoric and criticism would take in the latter half of the eighteenth century.

The extensive debates over the Union of 1707 which spilled on to the printed page were also indicative of a rhetorical transition in Scotland. As the rhetoric deployed by these orators and writers was civically orientated, rather than that refined by Blair and Smith for polite consumption, it contained many of the grammatical rules and principles which were prevalent in the rules of Renaissance rhetoric. However, the key figures in this debate, Andrew Fletcher, Lord Belhaven and Daniel Defoe among others, recognised that in order to reach a wider audience, they would have to adapt the more outmoded rhetorical principles, and engage with newly emerging methodologies that would eventually form the core of belletristic rhetoric. It is no surprise that these men were among the most successful protagonists in the Union debates, for they realised early on the power of the printed word, and its ability to reach further than oratory on its own could accomplish.

The legal profession in Scotland also had an important part to play in the development of rhetoric. Men such as Sir George Mackenzie produced works on

eloquence and style which was fit for the bar, and at the same time, he added to Scottish literature through his romance *Aretina*, but also through his fledgling essay on literary criticism which sought to establish the romance as an acceptable literary genre. Scots lawyers also formed a significant proportion of the literati, along with their fellow countrymen in the Church. This preoccupation with literature helped to create an environment where the basis of legal learning was tied to literary appreciation and a solid education in rhetoric, which was most obviously evident in the lectures on rhetoric and belles-lettres given by Adam Smith that were specifically designed to provide training to young lawyers.

With regard to religious rhetoric, there is compelling evidence that the Scottish clergy was moving towards a more enlightened outlook before the 1750s, which was demonstrated by the efforts of men like William Leechman and Francis Hutcheson, ordained ministers who, in the words of Hutcheson himself, 'put a new face upon theology in Scotland'. The fact that Leechman, Hutcheson and Blackwell at Aberdeen faced heresy charges over their new brand of learning illustrates that this process was still a long way from completion. Nevertheless, all three men were acquitted of the charges brought against them, which demonstrated that the Church of Scotland had mellowed from its previous hard line stance. This relaxation of the extreme Calvinism which had dogged the perception of the Presbyterian Church from the early seventeenth century paved the way for a new form of enlightened Presbyterianism which was championed by men such as Blair, Alexander Carlyle, Adam Ferguson and William Robertson. Furthermore, the popular party in Scotland were not, as Ned Landsman has previously confirmed, slaves to extreme evangelicalism, and in preachers of the calibre of John

Witherspoon, John Maclaurin, and John Erskine, and lay associates such As John Maclaurin and Andrew Crosbie, they were an intellectual force with which to be reckoned.

Ultimately rhetoric and literary criticism in the early Scottish Enlightenment were placed on a sure footing by those professors working in the increasingly enlightened universities. These university men did more than just clear the way for the literati of the later enlightenment to propound their rhetorical systems, instead they challenged the previously existing rules of rhetoric and belles-lettres, and developed critical systems which influenced the thinking of their students. In doing so they paved the way for rhetoric and literary criticism to become jewels in the crown of the Scottish Enlightenment.

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